COMIC BOOKS

COMICS FEATURE™

MARVEL COMICS BOUGHT

DETAILS INSIDE...

You are cordially invited to attend...
THE WEDDING OF
PETER PARKER
(SPIDER-MAN)
AND
MARY JANE WATSON

NUMBER 53
MARCH 1987
48432
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-COMICS ON FILM: THE FIRST DC SERIAL-
SUPERMAN

-RON GOULART'S NEW COMIC STRIP SERIES-
FEMALE FUNNIES

—A COMPLETE HERO HISTORY OF—
HAWKMAN

—TALES OF THE OLD WEST—
MARVEL'S COWBOYS

—MIKE BENTON GIVES THE TIPS FOR—
COLLECTING SMART!

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HAPPY HAL'S HOWLINGS

The four color world of comic book fandom is buzzing with the news. Marvel Comics has been bought! It's almost impossible to believe, the titan of comic book publishing has been purchased by a Hollywood movie company. And a small company—in Tinseltown terms—at that! Now both Marvel and DC are owned by film firms, New World Pictures and Warner Bros respectively. The complete story can be found on page seven and we'll, hopefully, have even more details on this next issue. Just what changes will the takeover bring? So far none, other than a massive flow of film and animation based on superheroes is promised. But we'll see. One unfortunate result of this important event as well as a few excellent, but abnormally long, columns is that the longer letters section that we promised last issue has been reduced to a mere page. We'll try again next time, but no promises.

There are a few other items that should be of interest to **COMICS FEATURE** readers, if for no other reason than that I am editing them, designers Jim and Ruth are designing several of them, and many of the **CF** contributors are involved in various ways. But, these are items that you would want to look for even if Happy Hal didn't make his smiling presence felt.

Cartoon Heroes is the first one that will blaze its way into stores across the country. There will be two different versions of this one, believe it or not. Why the odd situation? A specialty market product was planned before a decision was made to test it on the mass market. Rather than break our promise to our distributors and dealers we created two different books. The limited edition specialty will contain a special piece on G.I. Joe that isn't in the mass market version, as well as a review of the success that Comico has had transforming **Robotech** from animated to comic book form and a number of special pin-ups that are not in the mass market version. Both versions will have special coverage of He-Man and a look back at the old Thundaar series created largely by Jack Kirby and Steve Gerber. There will be other surprise goodies as well, of course. This is one that fans of **G.I. Joe**, **He-Man** and our own Animated Antics won't want to miss!

Independent Line is the next big winner-to-be, a genuine classic-in-the-making! The series will come out quarterly and is aimed squarely at fans of the new direct market titles—especially the myriad black-&-whites. This is the place where it finally will be appropriate to talk about all of those comics that never make it onto the newsstand The first issue will contain hero histories of both Elfquest and Cerebus, an interview with the Turtles people and lots of reviews. Future issues will contain even more exciting material as so far the response from the various publishers has been very supportive!

Comics on Film is the third in our new trio of pleasers. This one won't hit the racks until spring. With the DC films planned by Cannon, particularly **Superman IV** and the loads of tie-ins that will be upcoming from New Worlds (the new owners of Marvel Comics) there should be lots of exciting new ventures to report on. Plus we can take a revealing look at the films of the past as well as that lost world of the movie serial. I'm really looking forward to this one.

Critics Choice is another new title that you will want to keep an eye out for. Martin Cannon, the author of the highly successful **Howard the Duck** issue of **Files Magazine** is writing this one and drawing the covers. Martin, of course, is the guy who normally draws the covers for **COMICS FEATURE**. But it turns out that the guy has a real literary bent as well and has written on entertainment for various publications. In each issue of this quarterly title he'll take a look at one of the true artistic triumphs of comic books. Hot on the heels of covering Gerber's duck he's going to take a revealing look at Alan Moore's Swamp Thing. Future volumes will center on such varied fare as the Silver Surfer, the X-Men, Cerebus and loads of others. If you care to learn which comics are worth adding to your collection, or just enjoy a good read about some of your favorite books, do yourself a favor and pick this one up. This series is also going to be sold specialty market only or by mail order directly from us.

So that's what I've been working on lately—in addition to trying to make **COMICS FEATURE** even better than ever. After all, my goal in life is to make my readers happy!

Please do note that with the exception of the test issue of **Cartoon Heroes** each of these series is only available in comic book stores or through the mail. They will not appear in many of the outlets that sell **COMICS FEATURE**. It is my hope that many CF readers will seek them out though. They really provide an opportunity to elaborate on the subjects that we just don't have enough space for in these pages. As you have probably noticed each title is spun off from one of the columns in this magazine, **Cartoon Heroes** from Animated Antics, **Comics on Film** and **Independent Line** from the columns of the same name. **Critics Choice** is not a column in CF but only because we don't have the room. This is one I'd dearly love to run!

Till we meet again next month, be good and enjoy reading. It's a dying art...

Happy Hal

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FEATURES

WEDDING BELLS FOR A WALLCRAWLER

Marvel's flagship superhero, the ultimate batchelor Spider-Man is finally tying the knot. But will he hang up his webs to devote his life to the pursuit of domestic bliss? James Van Hise talked to comic strip author and co-creator Stan Lee, editor Jim Salicrup and writers David Michelinie, Marc DeMatteis and Jim Owsley to learn the inside story. Why is Peter Parker getting married? What changes will this bring in his life? And what else is happening on the books? We also learned about a very special Kraven the Hunter story planned for the months ahead!

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INDEPENDENT LINE—
A brand new adventure begins for Richard and Wendy Pini's elves. Plus the latest news and your guide to upcoming titles.
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FUN & PROFIT—
Mike Benton reveals all of the secrets you need to know to begin collecting smart. Plus the British invasion!
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COMICS ON FILM—
Eric Hoffman takes an exciting look at the very first Superman film serial. And Kirk Alyn—the Man of Steel himself—offers a few comments!
20

THE SILVER AGE—
The acrid smell of gunsmoke filled the air as Marvel's Kid Cowboys rode the range fighting supervillains and making the West safe. Will Murray recalls the days of derin' do with fondness and a touch of nostalgia.
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HEROES—
This time around, James Van Hise takes a look at the high-flying Hawkman and his Hawkwoman.
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PLUS A NEW SERIES IN... STRIP SEARCH—
Ron Goulart launches a brand new series devoted to Female Funnies, those fabulous heroines of the comic strip world.
40

FEATURE NEWS

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THE RETURN OF THE FLASH!

Coming from DC in February is the long awaited return of **The Flash**. The Silver Age Flash first appeared in **Showcase #4** in 1956. The Barry Allen Flash was first popularized by the writer/artist team of Gardner Fox and Carmine Infantino with other very able hands along the way. But Flash seemed to be limping badly in the Eighties and he met a bizarre and tragic end in the **Crisis On Infinite Earths** mini-series. In that series we saw Wally West (formerly Kid Flash) adopt the all red uniform as his own and he will emerge as the new Flash of the post-**Crisis** Earth. But due to problems previously afflicting him, he does not possess all the powers of Barry Allen. For instance, while he can break the speed of sound he cannot achieve the speed of light. The creative team is Mike Baron, Jackson Guice and Larry Mahlstedt. Watch for the first issue in February!

THOMAS ON NEW UNIVERSE

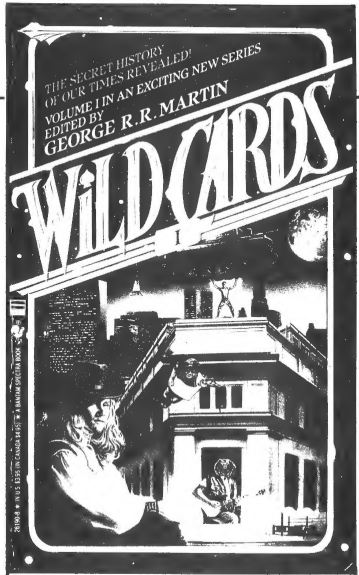
Roy Thomas has begun writing for Marvel Comics again for the first time in several years. In the early Seventies he was the Marvel Editor-In-Chief but after giving up that position he left the company over a dispute involving editorial control of books he was writing. He recently re-established ties with the company when he assisted Gerry Conway on an issue of **Spitfire And The Troubleshooters #5**. "That was my first Marvel work in a number of years," states Thomas, although he points out that a story he had written for **EPIC** right before he left the company six years ago was published in the final issue. This may have been the extent of his current involvement with Marvel had Mike Higgins, the editor of **Nightmask**, not called him about doing a fill-in issue.

"By coincidence, **Nightmask** was one of the New Universe books that I felt had the most possibilities because I'd always liked the DC Sandman character," Thomas explains, referring to the dream state adventures which one version of DC's Sandman indulges in, and which Thomas recently scripted some material for. "I said that if there wasn't any problem with the fact that I had been working with Sandman a little bit at DC that I'd be delighted to work on **Nightmask** because I liked it and what Archie Goodwin had done with the character when he created it. Now it looks as if I may be doing it on a regular basis. I liked that character from the start because of the dream aspect and I think you'll like the plots I'm coming up with."

Thomas is writing the book with his wife, Dann Thomas, and there has been some talk about doing other titles, but nothing definite at press time.

SILVESTRI ON X-MEN

Mark Silvestri, whose work can currently be seen on the **X-Men vs. Avengers** mini-series, has been named as the new penciller of the monthly **X-Men** comic. The former regular artist, John Romita, Jr., left the book during the initial issues of the "Mutant Massacre" due to the remands of drawing the monthly New Universe title, **Star Brand**. Some excellent fill-in issues appeared, including one by Barry Windsor-Smith, and in order to help Silvestri get on schedule issue 219 will be a fill-in by Bret Blevins (the new regular artist on **New Mutants**).



George R.R. Martin is pioneering a new home for super-heroes. He has created a universe much like our own with the exception that superheroes exist due to a special event. Much as with the Thieves World series, a number of writers will set tales in that universe. The book is prose and not a comic book or even a heavily-illustrated graphic book but it should be of interest to comic book fans.

NEW DC FORMAT

DC has begun publishing certain titles in a new format priced at $1.00 each. This format will be superior to the regular 75 cent comics but not the same as the deluxe $1.50 comics format. Each $1.00 book in this new format consists of 32 pages and is printed on Mando paper by offset presses.

It was less than a year ago that DC introduced the deluxe format on **Dark Knight** which is squarebound and like a smaller version of the graphic novel format pioneered by Marvel. DC has since used their deluxe format on the 2 volume **History Of The DC Universe**.

The new $1.00 format can currently be seen on the monthly **Spectre** series, which is written by Doug Moench, pencilled by Gene Colan and inked by Steve Mitchell. **Young All-Stars #1** will also employ the new format and these books are available only in the direct market comic shops.

LETTERS

Send all comments and correspondence to:
COMICS FEATURE
8399 Topanga Canyon Blvd.
Suite 210
Canoga Park, CA 91304

Dear Happy Hal,

"Bigger Than Ever!!!"

So says the blurb on the cover of #50. It probably is. I am in no position to know. In my opinion, however, the blurb should have read:

"Better Than Ever!!!"

Congratulations on becoming one of the two oldest magazines on comics currently being published on a regular basis. In my opinion, **COMICS FEATURE** is the *better* of the two magazines, by far. **CF** is colorful, upbeat, positive in its approach. Not so that other old dinosaur your magazine must share honors with.

(Happy Hal's NOTE: I do not believe that our friendly competition is a dinosaur and in fact do enjoy a number of their interviews. In fact they are really not that competitive as they run a different type of material.)

So, Wolverine is the fan's favorite. I can buy that (though Spider-Man got my vote). I'm glad to see Punisher up there also. He should have a magazine of his own. Hey, Marvel! If you are short on scripters, I'm available!

One thing really surprises me though. You list a LOT of characters as having tied for 4th place, but the one name I expected (and took for granted would be there) is *missing*. Where is Batman?

Le Roy D. Davis
Box 11
Florence, CO 81226

Le Roy—I was pretty disappointed to see that Bats did as bad as he did. Perhaps next time we do this he'll score a bit better. Certainly the work that Miller, Mazucchelli, Barr, Davis and Collins are doing deserves to be recognized. And the character is classic! By the way, and I'm not saying that we had any influence on this, but I understand that a new Punisher limited series is in the works...Happy Hal

DO-IT-YOURSELF-HERO

Dear Happy Hal,

I am a comic book collector and love to draw. Someday I would like to have a syndicated comic strip or draw for comics (whichever comes first!). Anyway, I hope you like the hero me and my friend created.

Mark Palmer
24573 Sunny Ridge Dr.
Moreno Valley, CA 92388

NAME: Tiger Paw
POWER:
superstrong, savage uncontrollable killer
ORIGIN: results of a genetic experiment with a tiger

NAME: Patrolman Power
WEAPONS: special paralyzer stun gun
POWER: strength, metallic body armor strong enough to withstand 25 pounds of dynamite
ORIGIN: born in the small city of Mevdinan on the planet Katak, Ikanos was drafted into the army when he was only 16. He was needed to help fight the growing evil of the Darkside of Katak. Demo, the leader of the Sunside, was picking people to help him lead the world and Ikanos was one. Using his vast power, Domo empowered Ikanos and he became the supersoldier and sometimes leader Patrolman Power.

BOTH CHARACTERS CREATED BY: Mark Palmer (18) and Bobby Garcia (18)

Next issue I hope to run some more DO-IT-YOURSELF-Heroes plus the first SCOREBOARD results and an update on the favorite hero picks—plus lots of your letters! Keep your fingers crossed that everyone doesn't keep squeezing me out!—Happy Hal

LOS ANGELES—The hot news today is that New World Pictures, Ltd. today announced that it has entered in to an agreement to acquire the Marvel Entertainment Group from Cadence Industries Corporation.

James Galton, President and Chief Executive Officer of Marvel, states, "All of us at Marvel are excited at the opportunity to become an integral part of New World's rapidly expanding operations. The close tie-ins between publishing, licensing and the film and television media have become ever more important in recent years. We believe that the synergy between New World's theatrical, television and video operations and Marvel's publishing, licensing and animation business creates a multitude of new avenues to exploit and promote Marvel's wealth of characters."

Lawrence L. Kuppin, Co-Chairman of New World, adds, "The business segments occupied by Marvel fit perfectly with New World's existing businesses. With the acquisition of Marvel, New World makes an entry in a substantial way into the publishing, animation merchandising and licensing arenas. Marvel's vast array of characters, its name recognition and enormous success in the comic and animation business will add impressive growing assets to New World's operations."

Harry Evans Sloan, Co-Chairman of New World, states, "Marvel's comics division dominates the US comic business and will provide Marvel Productions, New World Pictures, New World Television and New World Video with a steady stream of ideas and characters for animation, theatrical features, live action television production and made-for videos."

Sloan continues, "We are buying priceless resources to continue to entertain and capture the imagination of young people throughout the world."

The Marvel Entertainment Group includes the New York-based Marvel Comics Group, the world's largest publisher of comic books, Marvel Comics Ltd., their UK publishing and licensing subsidiary, and Marvel Productions, their California-based animation development and production operation.

Marvel Comics publishes 40 to 50 different comic books each month in the United States, including such popular headliners as the adventures of Spider-Man, the X-Men and the Fantastic Four. Marvel Comics sales account for almost 65% of all comics sold in America. Estimates place total readership at nearly 16 million readers per month. There are literally hundreds of characters inhabiting the Marvel Universe and New Universe.

In addition, Marvel publishes Star comics and Epic Comics. Rights to all Marvel-owned characters will become the property of New World. Of course, those characters, particularly in the Epic and Star lines, that Marvel publishes but does not own will not become the property of New World.

Marvel also publishes a wide variety of children's books under the Marvel Books imprint. These books include: coloring, pop-up, puzzle work books and other "activity" books designed for younger children. In addition, Marvel publishes a line of pre-school books under a license from Fisher—Price. The Fisher-Price books are distributed in Toys 'R' Us, Waldenbooks and Dalton Book Stores. Marvel Comics Group also licenses the various Marvel characters for use in toys, games, posters, clothing and other applications throughout the United States and Canada.

Marvel Comics Ltd. is the United Kingdom branch of Marvel which publishes five different comics weekly plus annuals and other special format materials marketed to the younger clientele which purchases the bulk of British comics.

The division is responsible for licensing the use of various Marvel characters throughout the UK and Western Europe. In addition, Marvel Comics are published, under license to other publishers, in 16 different languages and distributed in over 26 countries throughout the world.

Marvel Productions is currently producing five animated series for network and first run syndicated television for the current television season. The 250 one-half hour animated episodes currently in production make Marvel Productions the third largest producer of animated programming in the United States. Among the animated shows now in production are **Muppet Babies** for CBS, **G.I. Joe, Transformers** and **Defenders of the Earth** and **Pony and Friends** for first run syndication. Previously produced animated series from Marvel include **Spider-Man, The Incredible Hulk, Dungeons and Dragons, Defenders of the Universe** and **Fantastic Four**, all of which are now in syndication. Marvel has also produced two full-length animated features, **My Little Pony** and **The Transformers**.

Obviously the floodgates are open. The combination of the talents of the two companies makes a constant stream of new movie, television, video and animation product a foregone conclusion. Fans of the antics of superheros on screen will be thrilled. Let's just hope they do it right!

Comics Consumer Guide

DC COMICS

►1/13/87 Shipping Group

☐ **FURY OF FIRESTORM #59—**
(Ostrander/Brozowski)

☐ **THE JUSTICE LEAGUE #1—**
(LEGENDS crossover) (Giffen/Maguire/Austin)

☐ **THE OUTSIDERS #19—**
(Direct sales only) (Barr/Aparo)

☐ **TALES OF THE TEEN TITANS #77—**
(Reprints New Teen Titans #18) (Wolfman/Barreto/Tanghal)

☐ **VIGILANTE #41—**
(Direct sales only) (Kupperberg/Smith)

☐ **WATCHMEN #9—**
(Direct sales only) (Moore/Gibbons) Origin Silk Spectre.

☐ **WONDER WOMAN #4—**
(Perez& Wein/Perez & Patterson) Versus Decay.

►1/20/87 Shipping Group

☐ **BATMAN #407—**
(Miller/Mazzucchelli) Batman: Year One conclusion.

☐ **BLUE BEETLE #12—**
(Wein/Cullins/Barras) Side by side with the Teen Titans against Mento and his Hybrid.

☐ **ELECTRIC WARRIOR #13—**
(Direct sales only) (Moench/Balkle/Adkins)

☐ **LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES #34—**
(Direct sales only) (Part 3 of 4) (Levitz/LaRocque/DeCarlo)

☐ **SECRET ORIGINS #14—**
(Ostrander/McDonnell) 40 years of the Suicide Squad.

☐ **STAR TREK #38—**
(Wein/Sutton/Villagran) Return Harry Mudd.

☐ **SUPERMAN #5—**
(Byrne/Kesel)

☐ **ZATANNA #1—**
(Direct sales only) (One-shot) (Conway/Morrow) Visit the city of the Homo Magi.

►1/27/87 Shipping Group

☐ **ADV OF THE OUTSIDERS #45—**
(Reprints Outsiders #7) (Barr/Aparo)

☐ **BOOSTER GOLD #16—**
(Jurgens/DeCarlo)

☐ **ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN #428—**
(Wolfman/Ordway) The secret of Katerine Grant.

☐ **GREEN LANTERN CORPS #212—**
(Englehart/Staton/Farmer)

☐ **INFINITY, INC. #38—**
(Roy & Dann Thomas/King/DeZuniga) Helix on trial; Mr. Bones joins Infinity, and what of the Silver Scarab?

☐ **THE NEW TEEN TITANS #31—**
(Direct sales only) (Levitz/Barreto/Tanghal)

☐ **SANDKINGS GRAPHIC NOVEL—**
(George R. Martin—adapted by Moench/Broderick & McPheeters)

☐ **SHAZAM! A NEW BEGINNING #2—**
(Of 4) (LEGENDS spinoff) (Roy & Dann Thomas/Mandrake) Billy Batson wrestles with new-found powers while Sivana brings Black Adam to Earth.[NOTE: In the next **COMICS FEATURE** Roy Thomas will offer a history of the original Golden Age Captain Marvel!]

☐ **SWAMP THING #60—**
(Moore/Totleben)

☐ **WARLORD #117—**
(Fleisher/Randall)

►2/3/87 Shipping Group

☐ **ACTION #588—**
(Byrne/Giordano) Superman meets Hawkman.

☐ **CAPTAIN ATOM #3—**
(Bates/Broderick/Smith)

☐ **DETECTIVE #574—**
(Barr/Davis/Neary)

☐ **HAWKMAN #10—**
(Randall & Mishkin/Howell/Garzon) Hyathis Corp. is destroyed; Deron Ved captured.

☐ **MASK #4—**
(Fleisher/Swan/Schaffenberger)

☐ **THE QUESTION #4—**
(Direct sales only) (O'Neil/Cowan & Sienkiewicz)

☐ **THE SPECTRE #2—**
(Moench/Colan/Mitchell) Cult of the Blood Red Moon.

☐ **SUICIDE SQUAD #1—**
(LEGENDS spinoff) (Moench/McDonnell/Kesel) Stop the Jihad, Kuraq's superteam.

☐ **TALES OF THE LEGION #347—**
(Reprints Legion #22) (Levitz/LaRocque/DeCarlo)

☐ **TEEN TITANS SPOTLIGHT #10—**
(Ostrander/Larsen) Showdown between Aqualad and Mento.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 13

Independent Line

BLACKTHORNE LEGION PARODY

The **Legion of Stupid Heroes** is the latest parody book from Blackthorne Publishing, Inc. of San Diego, Calif. The 32 page, black and white, single issue release is scheduled for January '87 release.

The plot involves members of the legion being killed off one by one with the result that the comic books of expired heroes soar in value. Who is behind the killings? Could it be the Stupid Heroes who have replaced the fallen heroes? An old adversary? A speculator?

Written by Mike Helms and Taylor Overbey, the **Legion of Stupid Heroes** is illustrated by Overbey and Julian Kernes and will retail for $1.75 and be available in the direct marketplace only.

Other Blackthorne projects include a $2.00 black and white comic, **Ground Pound #1**, which is a collection of artist John Pound's work. The B&W comic will retail for $2.

BRAVO FOR ALEX TOTH

Dragon Lady Press will release a special collection of Alex Toth's **Bravo For Adventure** in January '87. The book will be 72 pages, black & white with a full-color cover and will retail for $5.95. The volume contains a full 48 page adventure which originally appeared in Warren's **Rook** magazine several years ago, a delightful 17 page fantasy story and a special 4 page introduction to "Jesse Bravo" written by creator Alex Toth.

Bravo For Adventure takes place in the mid-1930's and is reminiscent of the great aviator adventure strips of that period. Jesse Bravo is an ex-Navy pilot who works as a stunt pilot for the movies and runs his own air charter service between films. Assisted by his able mechanic, Bumper, Jesse is ready to take on any flying assignment for the right money, providing it doesn't conflict with his strong, personal code of honor. America in the 1930's was still in the midst of a depression and the challenge to succeed in any endeavor was a difficult one. Jesse Bravo was ready for that challenge.

SF'S RETIEF COMES TO THE COMICS

Keith Laumer's popular spacefaring rogue, Jame Retief, will appear on the comic book scene this spring, courtesy of science fiction artist Dennis Fujitake and Mad Dog Graphics.

"**Retief** is a double delight," says Mad Dog publisher Jan Strnad, who is also adapting the Laumer stories himself. "It's exciting science fiction and top notch comics. I've wanted to publish good sf comics for a long time, introducing comic book readers to the wonders of science fiction and proving to sf fans that comic books don't have to be kid's stuff."

Fujitake and Strnad will adapt existing Retief stories by Laumer for the comic book series, staying as close as possible to the originals. "We want to bring his vision of Retief, the Corps Diplomatique Terrestrienne, and the Irksome Groaci to comic fans intact," Strnad adds.

For the uninitiated, Retief is a 29th century Terran diplomat and a hardy individualist. His tolerance for bureaucratic red tape is short — almost non-existent, in fact. Where less intrepid men (such as his superiors at the CDT) fear to tread, Retief charges in with his own brand of "diplomacy."

Retief will be a 32 page, black and white comic selling for $1.75, available at comic shops only. The first issue of the bi-monthly series is scheduled for a March '87 release.

ELFQUEST® & Copyright © 1986 WaRP Graphics.

It's hard to believe that over two years have passed since the Elfquest epic reached its climax and new tales ceased to appear. Fans were forced to content themselves with the lavish full color reprints from Donning and Marvel's standard comic book repackagings—although those did have a few new pages. But now **Elfquest** has returned with a new 8-issue limited series which picks up right where the last one left off!

Wendy Pini is the writer/artist once again, but this time the inker is Joe Staton. And he isn't quite as smooth as Wendy. The other unfortunate change is one of size; the new series is in the common 8½ x 11 format. True fans will buy the new black & whites while admirers of Wendy's coloring technique will want to wait for the full color Donning reprint that'll surely come out in a couple of years. Wendy's color sense may well be the best in comics and these characters really come alive under her talented brush strokes.

The first issue, "Siege At Blue Mountain!" promises a top-notch adventure dealing with the final fate of the evil Winnowill. He wrecked real havoc in the final issues of the first series.

Elfquest, of course, was the first *really* successful black & white series and paved the way for the revolution in the marketplace that followed.

EPIC

- ☐ SWASHBUCKLERS #12—
- ☐ GROO #27—
- ☐ ELEKTRA #8—
- ☐ ELFQUEST #22—

COMICO

- ☐ JONNY QUEST #8—
- ☐ ROBO: NEW GEN. #13—
- ☐ GRENDEL #5—
- ☐ JUSTICE MACHINE #2—
- ☐ ROBO: MACROSS #17—

ECLIPSE

- ☐ SCOUT #15—
- ☐ TALES OF TERROR #10—
- ☐ LEGION INDEX #1—
- ☐ AIRBOY #13—
- ☐ ESPERS #4—
- ☐ MR. MONSTER SCIENCE #1
- ☐ SACRED & PROFANE ALBUM
- ☐ NEW WAVE #12—
- ☐ LARS OF MARS 3-D—
- ☐ AIRBOY #14—
- ☐ NEW DNAGENTS #17—
- ☐ V & V #2—

FIRST

- ☐ NEXUS #32—
- ☐ BADGER #23—
- ☐ EVANGELINE #1—
- ☐ GRIMJACK #34—
- ☐ DREADSTAR #30—
- ☐ AMERICAN FLAGG! #40—
- ☐ DYNAMO JOE #7—
- ☐ JON SABLE #47—
- ☐ CHRONICLES CORUM #3
- ☐ HAWKMOON #3—

MISC.

- ☐ ELFLORD #5—
- ☐ DRAGONRING #2
- ☐ PRIOR. WHITE HEAT #2—
- ☐ VENTURE #3—
- ☐ HAMSTER VICE 3-D #1—
- ☐ THE HONEYMOONERS #3
- ☐ LIGHTNING ALBUM—
- ☐ THUNDER AGENTS #7—
- ☐ ELITE PRESENTS #1—
- ☐ DINOSAUR REX #1—
- ☐ FUTURE COURSE #2—
- ☐ VALOR THUNDERSTAR #2
- ☐ GREYLORE ALBUM—
- ☐ RETURN OF MR. X ALBUM
- ☐ HERO ALLIANCE #2—
- ☐ TERRAFORMERS #3—

BLACK & WHITE

FOLLOWING IS A LIST OF BLACK AND WHITE COMICS THAT ARE SCHEDULED TO BE PRODUCED DURING THE MONTH OF NOVEMBER. PLEASE NOTE THAT MANY OF THESE PUBLISHERS ARE VERY BAD AT MAINTAINING THEIR INDIVIDUAL SHIPPING SCHEDULES AND THAT MANY OF THESE BOOKS WILL EITHER BE LATE OR NEVER EVEN APPEAR AT ALL. THE QUALITY OF THESE BOOKS RANGES FROM THE EXCELLENT TO THE ABSOLUTELY AWFUL. ALL TITLES ARE LISTED ALPHABETICALLY BY PUBLISHER.

AMAZING

- ☐ A. C. PREMIERES #3—
- ☐ BARNEY THE TURTLE #1
- ☐ BEAST WARRIORS #1—
- ☐ BLIP #1—
- ☐ EX-MUTANTS #6—
- ☐ THE GAJIT GANG #1—
- ☐ KAMIKAZE CAT #2—
- ☐ PHIGMENTS #3—

BLACKTHORNE

- ☐ 3 IN 1 #2—
- ☐ CROW&BEARCLAN #3—
- ☐ DANSE #1—
- ☐ DICK TRACY #9—
- ☐ FIGMENTS #1—
- ☐ GROUND POUND #1—
- ☐ HAMSTER VICE #6—
- ☐ JAX #2—
- ☐ LABOR FORCE #3—
- ☐ LAFFIN' GAS #5—
- ☐ LEGION STUPIDHEROES #1
- ☐ MAD DOG #2—
- ☐ MIDNIGHT #2—
- ☐ OF MYTHS & MEN #1—
- ☐ KANGAROOS #3—
- ☐ RIVIT #1—
- ☐ SHURIKEN NOVEL—

ECLIPSE

- ☐ CROSSFIRE #18—
- ☐ ELF-THING #2—
- ☐ FUSION #1—
- ☐ P.J. WARLOCK #2—
- ☐ STIG'S INFERNO #6—
- ☐ ZOT! #11—

FANTAGRAPHIC

- ☐ CRITTERS #12—
- ☐ DOG BOY #2—
- ☐ HONK! #4—
- ☐ LLOYD LLEWELLYN #6—
- ☐ PRIME CUTS #2—

IMPERIAL

- ☐ BATTLE #2—
- ☐ BLACKSTAR #2—
- ☐ DARK COMICS #1—
- ☐ NAZRAT #1—
- ☐ NINJA FUNNIES #3—
- ☐ PROBE #1—
- ☐ WINDBLADE #2—

KITCHEN SINK

- ☐ BORDER WORLDS #4—
- ☐ CRUMB'S XYZ—
- ☐ OMAHA #4—
- ☐ SPIRIT #27—

RENEGADE

- ☐ BLACK ZEPPELIN #6—
- ☐ FLAMING CARROT #15—
- ☐ HOLIDAY OUT #1—
- ☐ MS. TREE #36—
- ☐ NEIL THE HORSE #14—
- ☐ OPEN SEASONS #2—
- ☐ SILENT INVASION ☐6—
- ☐ 3-D ADVENTURE #1
- ☐ VALENTINO TOO! #1—

RIP OFF

- ☐ THE COMPLETE CHEECH #2
- ☐ FAT FREDDY'S #2—
- ☐ MIAMI MICE #4—
- ☐ TIME TWISTED TALES—

SHOWCASE

- ☐ COM. COSMIC #1—
- ☐ CRACKBUSTERS #3—
- ☐ CRYPTIC TALES #2—
- ☐ TONY SULLIVAN #1—
- ☐ TOTALLY GROSS #1—

SOLSON

- ☐ ALT UNIVERSE #1—
- ☐ ANIMISM #1—
- ☐ BLACKMOON #2—
- ☐ ZATOICHI WALRUS #2—
- ☐ CODENAME: NINJA #1—
- ☐ MASKED GRAPPLER—
- ☐ NINJUTSU #2—
- ☐ CANTERBURY TALES—
- ☐ ELF FACE #4—
- ☐ SAMURAI SANTA #1—
- ☐ STARWOLF #1—

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ALL RIGHT, YOU WORTHLESS VERMIN!
NO MORE MISTER NICE POPE
YOU THINK TARIM IS HAPPY JUST TO GET ALL OF YOUR DUMB GOLD COINS? DO YOU?
WELL MOST HOLY HAS NEWS FOR YOU! TARIM IS GOING TO DESTROY THE WORLD ANYWAY!

- ☐ SUDDEN DEATH!—
- ☐ SUPER FOXES #2—
- ☐ CRAZY PECKERS #2—

MISC.

- ☐ PUMA BLUES #3—
- ☐ CEREBUS #94—
- ☐ ROBIN RED #2—
- ☐ WHAT IS THE FACE? #2
- ☐ SAMURAI #14—
- ☐ STARK: FUTURE #8—
- ☐ WARLOCK #5—
- ☐ DEADWORLD #2—
- ☐ NIGHTSTREETS #3—
- ☐ THE REALM #6—
- ☐ L.I.F.E. BRIGADE #2—
- ☐ VARMINTS #1—
- ☐ REACTOR MAN #1—
- ☐ ANIME ILLUST #1—
- ☐ VENGEANCE SQUAD #1—
- ☐ MICRA #3—
- ☐ BORIS THE BEAR #5—
- ☐ CECIL KUNKLE VOL. 2 #1
- ☐ SQUATMAN #1
- ☐ DEATHBRINGER #1—
- ☐ FREE FIRE ZONE #1—
- ☐ FOREVER NOW #1—
- ☐ MAN FROM UNCLE #2—
- ☐ SHADOW BLADE #1—
- ☐ EARTHLORE #3—
- ☐ THE MIGHTY MITES #3—
- ☐ NINJA #4—
- ☐ A.C.T.I.O.N. FORCE #1—
- ☐ HEROIC #1—
- ☐ NEW TRIUMPH #6—
- ☐ TEX BENSON #4—
- ☐ WILD THINGS #2—
- ☐ BADE BIKER #2—
- ☐ GIZMO #5—
- ☐ ROCKOLA #1—
- ☐ RALPH SNART #4—
- ☐ FUTURE BEAT #2—
- ☐ ULTRA KLUTZ #7—
- ☐ GERBILS #3—
- ☐ STONE TROLL CAFE #1—
- ☐ GNAT RAT #1—
- ☐ LONE WOLF #1—
- ☐ SURVIVORS #1
- ☐ ALEXUS OF VIRTIGO #1—
- ☐ DIMENSION Z #3—
- ☐ OMICRON #1—
- ☐ DR. RADIUM #3—
- ☐ SMUARI SQUIRREL #2—
- ☐ RICK RAYGUN #6—
- ☐ TALONZ #1—
- ☐ NIGHT LIFE #2—
- ☐ POST BROTHERS #6—
- ☐ YUMMY FUR #3—
- ☐ ROCK N FIRE #1—
- ☐ MYTHOS #2—
- ☐ ADV SLATE SKATE #1—
- ☐ ANTI-SOCIAL JUNIOR—
- ☐ BOFFO LAFFS #5—
- ☐ THE BOOGIEMAN #2—
- ☐ CODA #3—
- ☐ COLE BLACK VOL II #2—
- ☐ CORBO #1—
- ☐ CRAZY ADULT #3—
- ☐ CZAR CHASM #1—
- ☐ DARK REGIONS #2—
- ☐ DISHMAN #1—
- ☐ FRAGMENTS #2—
- ☐ ICON DEVIL #1—
- ☐ LAST GENERATION #1—
- ☐ LEAPING WEASEL #1—
- ☐ LUGH, LORD OF LIGHT #1
- ☐ NERVE #4—
- ☐ NO NINJA MAN #1—
- ☐ PAJAMA CHRONICLES #2
- ☐ SCRATCH #5—
- ☐ SPACE BEAVERS #4—
- ☐ SPA-MAN #5
- ☐ SYNTHETIC ASSASSIN#1
- ☐ THORR SVERD #2—
- ☐ TIME OUT OF MIND #4—
- ☐ UNDIE DOG #1—
- ☐ ZOLASTRAYA #1—

Comics Consumer Guide

MARVEL

■12/16/86 Shipping Group

☐ **SILVER SURFER #1—**
(Englehart/Rogers) (First of 12) The Silver Surfer is freed of the Earth's confines.

►1/6/87 Shipping Group

☐ **DAREDEVIL #242—**
(Nocenti/Pollard)

☐ **NEW MUTANTS #51—**
(Claremont/Nowlan) Guest stars: Starjammers, Professor X, Hellfire Club, Storm. Storm and Magneto form an alliance with the Hellfire Club.

☐ **NIGHT MASK #7—**
(Goodwin/Giffen) Crossover with Justice.

☐ **PSI FORCE #7—**
(Michelinie/Hall) The team moves to Seattle and encounters a child vice ring using a Sanctuary halfway house as a cover.

☐ **STRIKEFORCE: MORITURI #6—**
(Gillis/Anderson/Williams) Introducing the second generation.

☐ **WEB OF SPIDER-MAN #26—**
(Petrucha & Kaminski/Morgan/Esposito)

☐ **WEST COAST AVENGERS #20—**
(Englehart/Milgrom/Sinnott) Part four of the seven-part time travel storyline as the team hurtles back into Rama Tut's time to fix Dr. Doom's time machine.

☐ **COMET MAN #4—**
(Of 6) (Mumy & Ferrer/Jones/Taloc) Reed Richards, She-Hulk and Nick Fury guest star.

☐ **CONAN THE KING #40—**
(Kraar/Docherty/Bator)

☐ **AVENGERS VS. THE X-MEN #2—**
(Stern/Silvestri/Rubinstein)

►1/13/87 Shipping Group

☐ **ALPHA FLIGHT #46—**
(Mantlo/Brigman/Portacio) Sasquatch is back.

☐ **AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #288—**
(Owsley/Kupperberg/Fern) Conclusion to Gang War storyline.

☐ **CAPTAIN AMERICA #329—**
(Gruenwald/Neary)

☐ **FALLEN ANGELS #2—**
(Of 8) (Duffy/Gammill/Palmer)

☐ **KICKERS, INC. #7—**
(Kavanagh/Nolan)

☐ **MERC #7—**
(Murray/?)

☐ **STRANGE TALES #2—**
(Dr. Strange—Gillis/Warner/Emberlin; Cloak & Dagger—Mantlo/Blevins)

☐ **FANTASTIC FOUR VS. X-MEN #4—**
(Of 4) (Claremont/Bogdanove/Austin)

☐ **MEPHISTO VS. FOUR HEROES #2—**
(Of 4) (Milgrom/J. Buscema/Wiacek) Mephisto captures the soul of a member of X-Factor.

☐ **SPIDER-MAN DIGEST #3—**
(Reprints Amazing Spider-Man #57-59)

►1/20/87 Shipping Group

☐ **MARVEL AGE #50—**

☐ **AVENGERS #279—**
(Stern/J. Buscema/Palmer) Election of new leader, departure of Wasp.

☐ **D.P. 7 #7—**
(Gruenwald/Ryan/Tanghal) Clinic captures several members of the team.

☐ **INCREDIBLE HULK #331—**
(L. Simonson/McFarlane) Conclusion of Rick Jones as Hulk storyline.

☐ **JUSTICE #7—**
(Englehart/Isherwood/Colletta)

☐ **MARVEL TALES #199—**
(Reprints Marvel Team-Up #64) (Claremont/Byrne)

☐ **THE 'NAM #6—**
(Murray/Golden) The rain, the VC and a fragging attempt.

☐ **SILVER SURFER #2—**
(Englehart/Rogers) Shalla Bal...

☐ **X-MEN #217—**
(Claremont/Guice/Green) The X-Men relocate to Muir Island and Dazzler battles the Juggernaut.

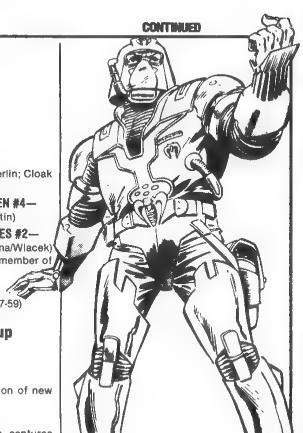
☐ **CONAN THE BARBARIAN #194—**
(Owsley/Semeiks/Isherwood)

☐ **G.I. JOE #59—**
(Hama/Wagner/Mushynsky) A new Joe.

☐ **MARVEL SAGA #18—**

☐ **MARVEL FANFARE #32—**
(Direct sales only) (DeMatteis/Gammill/Janke) Conclusion of two-parter of Cap vs. Yellow Claw plus MacKenzie/Smith on Vision.

CONTINUED



►1/27/87 Shipping Group

☐ **FANTASTIC FOUR #302—**
(Stern/ J. & S. Buscema)

☐ **IRON MAN #218—**
(Michelinie/Layton)

☐ **PETER PARKER #126—**
(Fingeroth/Mooney/Colletta) Guest-starring Spider-Woman and the Wrecking Crew.

☐ **SPITFIRE #8—**
(Conway & Thomas/Trimpe) New armor.

☐ **STAR BRAND #8—**
(Chase/Leonardi/Williamson) First of 2 parts.

☐ **THOR #379—**
(W. Simonson/S. Buscema) Midgard Serpent.

☐ **X-FACTOR #16—**
(L. Simonson/Mazzuchelli/Rubinstein) Featuring Masque.

☐ **CLASSIC X-MEN #9—**

☐ **TRANSFORMERS #28—**
(Budiansky/Perlin/Akin & Garvey)

☐ **TRANSFORMERS DIGEST #3—**

☐ **MARVEL UNIVERSE TRADE PB #3—**

FUN & PROFIT

BY MIKE BENTON

ILLUSTRATIONS BY MATT HAWES

COLLECTING SMART

Most comic book readers collect by titles. They want **X-Men**, **Superman**, **Daredevil** or **Batman**. Their entire collection consists of ordered runs of title after title.

And that's great — except for one thing. They may be doing it all wrong.

Collecting comics should ideally be an *intelligent* gathering of books. When most collectors start collecting a particular comic title, however, they have little idea what kind of collection they want or where it is going. Mostly they just buy each new issue as it comes out and put it on top of last month's issue.

This column is a study in collecting intelligently. You will learn how to collect at the most elementary level — by title. To show you how it's done, we'll use the **Amazing Spider-Man** as an example title.

DEFINING YOUR COLLECTION

The first step in intelligent collecting is to define your collection. For most collectors, this consists of deciding which titles to collect. In our example, a collector decides he wants to collect **Spider-Man**.

The first step in defining your collection is to limit it. If you collect Spider-Man, for example, do you collect every Spider-Man comic, old ones and new ones?

Often when a collector chooses a title, he limits the range of issues he collects. For example, he may start with #50 or #100 of a title instead of the earlier and more expensive isssues or he may collect only the older issues from previous years and ignore the recent issues of a title.

Regardless, the first step in intelligently collecting a comic title is to decide which issues you want to collect. This lets you concentrate on completing the title and narrows your wants.

For this example, our collector decides he wishes to collect only the **Amazing Spider-Man** title. He also decides that he wants to collect every issue of that title, from #1 to the current issue, including all the annuals and specials. He won't be collecting the other Spider-Man books, such as **Peter Parker** or **Web of Spider-Man** so that he can concentrate on completing this one series.

When you do decide what issues of a title you want to collect, be sure that it is challenging enough so you won't get bored, but within the realm of possibility so you won't become discouraged.

COLLECTING STRATEGY

To collect intelligently, you need to have a plan. You first need to know what comics you want, what comics are the hardest and most expensive to get, and which comics you should try to buy first for your collection.

To help plan your strategy, you need to look very closely at the titles you choose to collect. This will help you decide upon a course of action that will let you complete your collection at the lowest cost and for the best return on your investment.

In our example, the collector needs to chart out a strategy for obtaining every issue of the **Amazing Spider-Man** comic — or around 300 different issues!

The first thing to do in this case is to make up a want list for all the **Spider-Man** comics you need. Better yet, make up a list of all the comics you have and their condition. This way you can add to the list as you find and buy issues.

Now look at the numbers you still need. Your first step in intelligent collecting is to decide in which order you should get the remaining comics.

Do you try to save all your money and buy the first ten issues for hundreds of dollars? Should you go for the later cheap books when you can find them for under a buck?

There are many variables in determining which issues of a title to get first. Let's look at some of them:

1) ARTISTS

The most interesting variable in collecting a comic title is the artist. Perhaps no other lone factor is as important to a collector as the person who drew the comic. A good artist can make a difference between a ten dollar comic and a hundred dollar comic.

What this means is that the comic book reader who is collecting a certain title must be keenly aware of which issues are drawn by which artist. Even if you are not particularly interested in who drew the comic, the artist does affect the price and availability of the book — something all collectors are very much interested in.

In our example, the **Amazing Spider-Man**, we can see that a large number of different artists contributed to the title.

The number one Spider-Man artist is of course Steve Ditko. Every issue that Ditko did (#s 1 through 38) is a very collectible book. For this reason, a collector might decide to locate these early issues as soon as possible.

As for the other major artists on **Amazing Spider-Man** (Romita, Kane, Andru, Pollard), their presence or absence seems to have little effect on an issue's collectibility.

Collectors of the Spider-Man title should notice, however, that Jack Kirby did contribute to issue #8 and that Frank Miller, John Byrne and Art Adams have also made brief appearances in the title's run.

3] KEY ISSUES

Every comic book title has its "key" issues. A key issue is a biggie — it's an important book, and most collectors want it badly.

The most obvious key issue of a title is the first issue, the ever-important #1. Generally, the first issue of a title is also the most expensive, although monetary value alone does not make a key book.

Besides the first issue, the issue that features a character's origin is also a key issue.

With the **Amazing Spider-Man**, the first issue also featured his origin. (Actually, his origin first appeared in **Amazing Fantasy** #15 — which is also arguably a key issue for the **Amazing Spider-Man** title.) It's no surprise that **Spider-Man** #1 is a key issue, and one that an intelligent collector would probably plot and scheme to obtain at some point.

However, there are other key books that are not so obvious as the first issue. For example, Spider-Man's origin was also retold in issue #94. Newer collectors might also want to seek out issue #181 which is a later retelling of the origin. Such issues that re-tell a character's origin generally become a key issue.

Often key issues may also feature the introduction of a major continuing character or villain.

For example, issues #s 14 and 50 of **Spider-Man** feature the first appearances of the Green Goblin and the Kingpin, respectively, and they are worth more than other similar issues from the same time period.

Sometimes a key issue reflects a significant change in the title's character or storyline. For example, **Spider-Man** issues #121 and 122 featured the deaths of Gwen Stacy and the Green Goblin. Issue #252 marked the debut of a new Spider-Man costume.

Besides first issues, anniversary issues such as #100, #150, #200, etc. are usually special or key issues. Both **Spider-Man** #100 and #200 featured special anniversary stories that made the books even more collectible.

A big step in collecting intelligently is to make up a list of the key issues of a title. Decide which are the important issues, the most collectible books, and then find a way to get them before the other collectors do.

4] SLEEPERS

Just like there are "key" issues in every title, there are also "sleepers." Sleepers, as discussed in an earlier column, are comic books that are very collectible but have not yet achieved their full price in the market.

In other words, a sleeper is an undervalued comic that should be worth more than it is now selling for.

For obvious reasons, sleepers are the best issues to buy early before people wake up and buy them. Deciding which issues of a title are sleepers is a real challenge, however, and the ability to do so is a sign of an intelligent collector.

Usually a sleeper has one of these traits: (1) It introduces a new character that later becomes a major star; (2) It features early artwork by an emerging great artist; or (3) It features a significant change in storyline. Of course it can also contain a combination of these.

One example of a sleeper is **Spider-Man** #129 which features the introduction of the Punisher. Until about a year or so ago, this particular issue was a sleeper. For a long time, you could buy this book for a dollar in near mint condition at conventions and comic book stores around the country.

When the new Punisher series came out, however, collectors woke up and realized that #129 was a hot comic. Now it sells for *four* times as much as #128 or #130. A smart collector would have jumped on issue #129 as soon as the Punisher series was *announced* by Marvel, and before **Punisher** #1 hit the stands.

When you collect a title, be sure that you know what occurred in each issue so you can spot a sleeper early in the game.

4] SETTING STANDARDS

Another aspect of collecting intelligently is to decide upon standards for your collection.

For example, you may want to limit your collection to only books in Fine to Mint condition. On the other hand, you may decide to accept any condition book just so it is complete and readable. Whichever condition standard you choose is fine.

The important thing, however, is to make a *conscious* decision now about the condition standards so that later you won't regret buying a comic in lesser condition than is acceptable. Also, this can keep you from spending too much on Mint condition books if you decide at the beginning that you'll be happy with a Good condition book.

Besides determining a condition standard for your collection, you also need to decide early if you want only original issues in your collection or if you will accept reprints.

If you collect some titles, such as **G.I. Joe, Star Wars** or the alternative comics which are often reprinted, this will be an important decision.

5] REPRINTS AND ORIGINALS

When you start collecting a comic by title, you have to decide if you want to collect reprinted books. Most collectors who are keeping up with a title will buy reprints just to have a complete collection.

Collectors must also decide, however, if they will buy a reprint as a substitute for an expensive original issue in their collection.

For example, **Spider-Man** #121 (which has an approximate

Mint value of $20) features the death of Gwen Stacy. The same story is reprinted in Marvel Tales #98 which can be bought for less than a dollar.

For more of a contrast, consider that the Mint price for **Spider-Man** #1 is around $900 while the book that reprinted it (**Marvel Tales** #138) is available for $1.

Obviously, you may want to buy such a reprint to hold a place in your collection until you can buy the original issue. Some collectors, however, may be perfectly content to buy only the reprint and forget about the original issue.

If you know you would be happy with a reprint, then don't waste your money buying original issues which have already been reprinted or *may be reprinted*.

Intelligent collecting means that you know in advance if you will collect reprints, either in addition to or in place of the original issues.

6) WATCHDOG THE MARKET

The next step in intelligent collecting is to become knowledgeable about the title you collect and the current demand for it in the marketplace.

For example, in the case of **Spider-Man**, there are always some issues which collectors want more than others. This may change from month to month and year to year.

A few years ago, **X-Men** collectors started making a run on **Spider-Man** #s 161 and 162 which featured Nightcrawler, a new X-Man. If you were collecting Spider-Man intelligently back then, you would have made sure that you had these issues already in your collection.

Generally, and early appearances by a fan-favorite artist in a title bear watching in the marketplace. If you sense a rising interest in some issues in a title that you collect, it would only be intelligent if you got those issues before the crowd catches on.

7) BUDGET YOUR MONEY

If you got money, you don't need brains — simple enough. But if you collect comics intelligently, your brains can be a good substitute for money.

Each month you probably have a certain amount of money you can spend on your collection. If your collection happens to be a title, such as **Amazing Spider-Man**, then you need to decide what issues will get your money first.

Probably the best and most obvious advice is to go for bargains over numbers. In other words, if you see a great deal on **Spider-Man** #100, don't pass it up because you're saving all your money to buy #1.

While it is a good idea to make a "hit" list of the comics you want to get first for your collection, don't ignore the good deals in the process.

A good rule is to buy books first that you know rarely turn up. The second rule is to buy books that are in the most demand before they rise quickly in price.

It's not always obvious, however, which is the best buy. For example, if you have a choice between buying **Spider-Man #2 at 20% off**, or **Spider-Man** #121 at a 50% discount, which should you do?

While it looks like you're getting a better deal on #121, you actually save more money if you buy #2 instead.

Issue #121 in Mint is about $15 a book. At a 50% discount, you save $7.50. Issue #2 is $300 in Mint. At a 20% discount you save $60.

The point is that there are always many considerations when **intelligently evaluating which issue to buy next for your collection.**

DECISIONS, DECISIONS...

IN A NUTSHELL

In summary, here are the rules and approaches for intelligent collecting:

☐ **Define your collection.** For most collectors, this means deciding which titles and which issues of a title to collect.

☐ **Make up a want list.** Keep a list of the comics you need. Make special notes about individual issues that are especially wanted or desired.

☐ **Know your title.** Find out the artists that worked on the books you want. Keep up with which characters, villains, etc. appeared in which issues. Know if these were first appearances or origin issues.

☐ **Know the special issues.** Every title has anniversary issues and special issues that herald a change in storyline or artwork. Know the ones you need.

☐ **Develop a strategy for each title.** Every comic book title has it's own set of challenges to collect. You'll need to discover which are the tough issues to find and which are the sleepers and the key issues. Then decide which of these books you'll try to get first.

☐ **Budget your resources.** Be realistic about the amount of money you can spend on collecting. Be sure you allow enough money to buy something every month for your collection.

☐ **Buy smart.** No matter what you collect, you can always find bargains. As you start to complete your collection, you may have fewer choices about what you need and can buy. In the beginning, however, go for the issues that seem the best value for your money.

☐ **Always evaluate.** Make sure that your standards and goals for your collection are realistic. If you find that the only comics you need are the really expensive ones, you may wish to branch out to other titles. Don't become a slave to collecting and think that you simply must have one certain issue, no matter what the cost.

☐ **Have fun.** If you're not having gobs of fun, no matter how intelligently you collect, then you're doing it all wrong. Remember that collecting is far more than going after the issues you don't have—it's also enjoying the issues you do have.

HOT/TIPS...HOT/TIPS...

THE BRITISH ARE COMING, THE BRITISH ARE COMING!

For those old enough to remember, the early 1960s marked the musical British invasion by the Beatles, Stones and other rock groups.

American music was never the same again, and some of the hottest and most collectible record albums from that time period are done by these British groups.

What does that have to do with comics?

Simply that the Brits are doing it all over again—they're injecting a new shot of creativity in the comic field, and collectors should take notice.

Alan Moore is, of course, the most highly recognized British talent and all of his books are in demand by collectors.

Brian Bolland is pencilling a series of top-notch stories for Marvel's **X-Men Classics.**

Dave Gibbons, yet another English gentleman, is teamed up with Moore on the fantastic **Watchmen** series from D.C.

Kevin O'Neill, another artist from the foggy Isles, has also done some outstanding work for D.C., notably on the **Green Lantern** series.

Now these talents are together in a series of comic books from a new comic company. I'm talking about the new line from Quality Comics.

These people are publishing **Judge Dredd, Rogue Trouper, Dan Dare** and my personal favorite, **Sam Slade, Robohunter.**

The art and writing is top notch, and you get plenty of entertainment for your buck. I think these have good investment potential.

If this company takes off, these early issues will be in demand. I suggest you load up on these titles now while the getting is good. Even if you don't make a profit, you will have fun!

Back in thirty.

COMICS ON FILM

ERIC L. HOFFMAN

SUPERMAN®

THE COLUMBIA SERIALS

PART ONE

By 1940, Superman had become a part of American culture. The fighter for 'truth, justice and the American Way,' created by Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster was turning in virtually all the entertainment mediums of the period. Besides his appearances in **Action Comics** and **Superman** magazine, he would eventually get his own syndicated newspaper comic strip. He could be heard on radio (voice provided by Clayton (Bud) Collyer) in his own exciting series of adventures. He would even be the subject of a special strip for an issue of **Look** magazine, when America entered World War II, in which he would deal with the Axis war-makers in his own appropriate super-way.

The medium of television was still experimental. So the only entertainment medium left for the Man of Steel to conquer was the movies. National Comic's superhero would be a natural 'hot' property for the silver screen... as well as assured money in the bank.

The first announced intention of adapting Superman to the motion picture medium was made by Republic Pictures, considered by action fans to be *the best* producer of serials and 'B' western/action thrillers for the time. In their ad advance promotion book for 1941's output, the studio used two pages to announce its intentions to produce a serial featuring the Man of Steel. But negotiations with National Comics were rocky. National wanted control of the serial's production. Republic, used to doing things its own way...and having an impressive track record of audience pleasers to its credit...would not agree. While this was going on, Paramount Pictures made its own offer to National. That company saw Superman as the perfect subject of a series of color cartoon adventures to be produced by Max Fleischer's animation studio.

In the end, it was Paramount's offer that received the nod from National, reportedly assisted by the opinion of Superman's creators, Siegel and Shuster, that animation was the right medium for their brainchild. What resulted were 17 classic Technicolor cartoon adventures, produced from 1941 thru 1943.

As for Republic, having lost out on acquiring Superman for their production roster, it went and acquired the film rights to Superman's biggest rival in comics: Captain Marvel.

COLUMBIA GETS SUPERMAN

In 1947, Columbia Pictures managed to succeed where Republic had failed. Sam Katzman, the studio's head of serial production (as well as assorted 'B' pictures) was given the task of producing the first live-action adventures of the Man of Steel. The resulting 15 episode 'super-serial' would become one of Columbia's biggest money-makers for 1948.

Katzman was best known for the production of low-budget 'program' pictures that usually served as the lower half of a double-bill. His films may have been short on

production values (and sometimes on entertainment), but Katzman had one important thing going for him in the industry; his films always made money.

Katzman had been producing films and some serials independently during the '30s. He set up his tent at Monogram Pictures where he produced low-budget chillers (usually with Bela Lugosi), comedies and the 'East Side Kids' series, among others. In 1944, Katzman moved to Columbia, where he produced his first serial for the studio, **Brenda Starr, Reporter**, adapted from Dale Messick's popular comic strip. From then on, until the mid-'60s, Katzman would produce serials, 'B' pictures and a series of jungle adventures starring Johnny Weissmuller as comic strip hero 'Jungle Jim' (which no doubt earned Katzman his nickname in the industry of 'Jungle Sam'). Following the end of his association with Columbia on a regular basis, Katzman would continue to produce films for other studios.

One of the factors that probably made the deal with National a reality was the studio's agreement to allow National to oversee the various aspects of the serial's production. All to insure that the 15-episode adventures of Superman would remain faithful to National's property.

Five veteran serial scribes were assigned the task of coming up with a plot for the film. George H. Plympton and Joseph Poland were to come up with a storyline, which would then be turned into a script by Arthur Hoerl, Lewis Clay and Royal K. Cole.

To direct the 15-episode 'super-serial', Katzman assigned Spencer Gordon Bennet and Thomas Carr. Bennett, as most serial fans are aware, had been in the business since the silent era, learning his craft and eventually getting his first directing assignments in serials. He would direct several of the 'classic' silent chapter-plays, as well as other action films, and would make the transition into the sound era with ease. There he was constantly on call to direct everything from 'B' westerns to serials, many of which remain superb examples of fast-paced exciting action. Bennet also had the reputation for avoiding wasting footage when shooting a film, consequently keeping a production within budget (and sometimes below budget!), which must have impressed a producer like Katzman. Bennett had the unique ability to see in his mind's eye how he wanted the film to look; he could edit the film in the camera. That is, he could shoot the picture the way it should be edited.

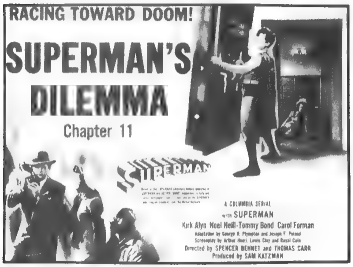
The next step was casting the main characters. For supporting players, Katzman could call on a 'stock' company of players. For the main characters, he did a bit of a mixture. Noel Neill, who had been one of the stars of Katzman's Teenagers musical comedy series for Monogram, was cast as Lois Lane. She would become *the* Lois Lane for fans, appearing in what would eventually be two serials dealing with the Man of Steel, and continue to play the intrepid reporter on the tv series from 1953 through 1957(episodes 27 - 104). Tommy Bond, best known as the bully 'Butch' from the 'Our Gang/Little Rascals' comedies, became Jimmy Olsen, cub reporter for the *Daily Planet*. Character actor Pierre Watkin proved to be an excellent choice for hte role of editor Perry White.

CASTING A MAN OF STEEL

But there was still the problem of finding an actor to portray the Man of Steel. That in itself became a super-headache for producer Katzman and director Bennet, who had been interviewing everybody from fighters to wrestlers to stunt men without any luck. Eventually, Katzman contacted Kirk Alyn, an actor who worked for him in such programmers as **Little Miss Broadway** and **Sweet Genevieve** (one of Alyn's personal favorites). Alyn had come to films from a career that included stage and night clubs (where he had been a dancer and a singer). He still considers the 53 weeks he spent on tour with madcap comedians Olsen and Johnson ("Their motto was 'anything for a laugh', and they lived up to it!") as a member of the touring company of the lunatic comedy review **Hellzapoppin** (where anything could...*and did!*...happen) as one of the most memorable experiences of his show business career. He also jokingly refers to it as an excellent training ground for becoming the Man of Steel: "If you were able to come out of it in one piece and with all your marbles, you *were* Superman!"

Alyn had recently done two westerns for which he had let his hair and beard grow. He still had the beard when Katzman contacted him to come to the studio and meet with him, Bennett and some representatives of National Comics. Needless to say, Katzman was far from overjoyed when the bearded Alyn arrived ("What the hell have you got on your face!' he yelled at me when I walked into the office, 'How the hell are these guys going to know what you look like?'"). Eventually, with some stills of a clean-shaven Kirk Alyn from one of the films he had done for Katzman, Alyn got the approval of the men from National, thereby becoming the first actor to portray the man Man of Steel live on the movie screen.

There would be times during the filming of **Superman** when Kirk Alyn would wonder what he had gotten himself into.



Villainy would be provided for 13 of the serial's 15 episodes by Carol Forman as the diabolical, ruthless Spider Lady. She had already appeared in one serial for Republic, **The Black Widow** (1947) and would give Alyn on-screen difficulties as the villain of two more serials, **Federal Agents Vs. Underworld Inc.** (1949) and **Blackhawk** (1952). George Meeker, usually playing suave criminals and other smooth but unsavory characters, was cast as the Spider Lady's chief aide and confidante Driller, while such familiar 'B' picture action faces as Charles King, Terry Frost, Jack Ingram, Charles Quigley, Herbert Rawlinson, Forrest Taylor and Rusty Westcoatt, among others, would round out the cast. Nelson Leigh and Luana Walters were Jor-El and Lara, Superman's original Kryptonian parents, appearing during the first several minutes of episode one.

FIRST FORAYS

Episode One, "Superman Comes To Earth," recounted the Man of Steel's origin, from his being the sole survivor of the doomed planet Krypton to his being raised by Ma and Pa Kent and his eventual leaving home as a young man to seek his fortune in Metropolis. Alyn himself didn't make his first appearance in the serial until the last 10 minutes or so as the grown-up Clark Kent, glasses, mild-manners and all. An unidentified infant was Superman as a baby, youngster Alan Dinehart III was Clark Kent as a boy and Ralph Hodges portrayed Clark as a teenager, saving his father and the family car from the double-menace of a fallen high-voltage wire and a tornado.

The episode ended with Clark waiting at the railway station to catch the train to the big city...a.k.a. Metropolis. But already trouble is starting to enter the life of Clark Kent. A track walker has discovered a rail that has broken loose from its bolts, leaving a gap in the track. And the Metropolis Ltd. is heading full-tilt through the area, loaded with passengers. When the train hits the broken track, it will be derailed!

Episode one came to an exciting "Don't Miss The Next Exciting Episode" conclusion as the train hurtles towards destruction after all attempts to flag it down fail. Seeing the impending catastrophe, Clark realizes he has his first "...job for Superman..." and ducks behind some nearby bushes. Moments later, Superman makes his first appearance bounding onto the track and heading for the broken rail!

Would the Man of Steel be able to save the train and all aboard it?

Episode Two saw Clark arriving in Metropolis, once more doing a superdeed (rescuing an unconscious woman from inside a burning building) and managing to see Perry White at the **Daily Planet**, wangling a promise of a job with the paper if he can get the story on a mine disaster that reporters Lois Lane and Jimmy Olsen were on their way to cover (by a coincidence, they happened to be on the Metropolis Ltd. in Episode One). The company guards are keeping everybody away from the mine site and Lois and Jimmy can't get the story. Needless to say, Clark not only succeeds, but also rescues Lois and a group of miners trapped in a cave-in...or rather, Superman does. The rest of the serial followed Superman's attempts to foil the plans of arch-criminal The Spider Lady and her henchmen to steal a new superweapon, the Reducer Ray. Invented by one Professor Graham, the Reducer Ray harnesses 'reducer rays' (a.k.a. cosmic rays) and concentrates them into a weapon of tremendous destruction. With the machine in her hands, the Spider Lady intends to use the device to take over the world. Only Superman presents any opposition.

The end of Episode Three brought in Superman's one weakness, kryptonite, the surviving part of a meteor that crashed outside of Metropolis. In the office of Professor Leeds, head of the Metropolis Museum, Clark is exposed to the glowing rock and collapses, causing Leeds to think he is dead. In fact, the episode ends with Leeds examining Clark then telling the Museum operator to "Get me the coroner. Clark Kent just died in my office!"

Of course, such was not the case. For one thing, the serial had 12 more episodes to go.

Needless to say, the defender of "...truth, justice and the American Way..." triumphed and the Spider Lady met her fate in the rays of the very machine she planned to use to wreak havoc on the world.

One of the aspects of the serial that has been picked at by some who remember seeing it originally was the fact that whenever Superman flew, animation was used. As Sam Katzman's unit didn't have special effects by such as Republic's Lydecker brothers, Howard and Theodore, to duplicate the excellent flying sequences that highlighted the Captain Marvel serial, some other means of getting Superman to fly on screen were needed. Suspending Alyn on wires before a process screen was attempted, but after shooting lots of footage, it was found during the viewing of the rushes that the wires showed up clearly. Needless to say, the budget-conscious Sam Katzman was not too happy and in the end, cartoon animation was decided upon. So whenever Alyn took off in the guise of Superman, the image would suddenly meld into the cartoon image, streaking through the sky in any of the poses assumed by the character in the comic strip when in flight. At first, it must have been a bit disappointing to audience members who had been expecting something along the lines of the 'flying dummy' effects of Captain Marvel. But after a bit, one got to accept it and even enjoy the way it fit into the fantastic scheme of things.

Portraying Superman was possibly the hardest acting job that Alyn ever undertook. There must have been times that he had wished that he *was* Superman, for he had more than his share of above-the-call-of-duty moments and a close shave or two, such as when they had to shoot the sequence of him holding the broken track back in place along a real railroad right-of-way...and the train didn't slow down from its 90 mph speed while he was positioned about 15 inches or so away at a position almost on top of the track itself. And everybody else (railroad technical advisor, director Spencer Bennet, cameraman and crew) moved back to a safe distance!

And then there was the incident during the filming of the 'escape' for the beginning of Episode Ten, where Superman has to rescue a tied-to-a-chair Lois Lane before a duplicate of the Reducer Ray machine blows up. While filming the scene, Alyn got too close to two electrical terminal poles, which were emitting an arc of electrical lightning...and the arc of electricity jumped from one terminal pole to his belt buckle and then rebounded off to the other terminal pole while everybody watched horrified. If it hadn't been for the special rubber soles in the boots of his Superman costume (referred to as the 'uniform' at the studio), Kirk would have been obliterated on the spot!

SECRET IDENTITY

But perhaps the most agonizing thing, in addition to the near Herculean efforts that he had to perform (most of the footage of Superman in action was of Alyn in the Superman outfit), was that part of the agreement with National Comics which guaranteed the identity of the performer portraying Superman was literally classified as "top secret"! The thought behind this was to give the idea that Superman was being played on screen by...Superman! Kirk did receive billing on the posters for the serial, but when the actual 'cast of characters' listing appeared on the screen, the name of Superman headed the list, followed by Noel Neill as Lois Lane and so forth. Kirk didn't even receive billing as Clark Kent!

To protect all this, and more, the **Superman** set was closed to outsiders, especially the scenes where the Man of Steel would be doing his super-deeds in his distinctive uniform. To an actor, such anonymity in what had to be the super-role (sic) of all times must have been like being in purgatory.

However, in true show-biz fashion, it was the trade paper **Variety** that smashed the curtain of secrecy. In the October 18, 1948 issue, the story 'Hail The Forgotten Man!' revealed to the world Kirk's portrayal of Superman!

THE PAY OFF

Superman was probably the most expensive serial that Sam Katzman had ever made, and as the costs grew, he was noticeably worried. But the project paid off tremendously.

Upon its release, **Superman** became the first serial in many years to get playing time at the first run theaters...and not just on Saturday matinees! In New York, for example, the massive RKO theatre chain booked Superman and ran it a chapter-a-week on their regular theatrical first run bills, as well as on matinees. The serial became the studio's biggest grosser for that year...as well as one of the highest grossing serials of all time.

It became a must item for many exhibitors to book, and Columbia made the most of this, using it as part of their 'block booking' packages. In other words, any theaters that wanted to get **Superman** would have to agree to book a certain number of features and serials from Columbia in order to get at the 'super-serial'. The success of **Superman** caused Columbia to refer to it in the pressbooks for their future serials ("...from the company that gave you... SUPERMAN!").

On screen, Kirk Alyn seemed to be enjoying himself portraying the Man of Steel, throwing himself into the proceedings. His acting training enabled him to come up with different characteristics for Superman and his alter-ego Clark Kent, coming on a bit timid (but not too) and with a slightly higher tone as the 'mild-mannered reporter', while being more heroic and, taking a page from Bud Collyer's portrayal of Superman on the radio, lowering his voice a bit when in the distinctive costume. In fact, the first serial even had Superman doing some of the bits that had become part of the radio show, including having Superman intone, from time to time, the distinctive lines "This looks like a job for Superman!", and the famous "Up! Up! And Away!" Unfortunately, while this may have worked on radio, where audiences could visualize Superman taking off to that famed war cry, it actually evoked some laughter, not quite fitting in with the visual adventures of the Man of Steel.

Just how good Kirk Alyn was in his portrayal of Superman can only be indicated by the fact that from that point on he would be identified with the role (just as Buster Crabbe would be with Flash Gordon and Ralph Byrd with Dick Tracy) for the rest of his career.

The Man of Steel's live-action film debut was a resounding success. Two years later, Columbia would decide to produce another serial featuring the Man of Steel and Superman would fly once again upon theatre screens!

CF

THE ISSUE AFTER NEXT, LOOK FOR:
ATOM MAN VS. SUPERMAN!

A WEDDING FOR A WALLCRAWLER

After almost two and a half decades of happy bachelor superheroics, Marvel's flagship loner and former wallflower is about to tie the knot!

BY JAMES VAN HISE

High school and teenage angst are long behind Peter Parker now, but he still hasn't had a smooth road. His last important relationship with a woman (with Gwen Stacy) ended when she died at the hands of The Green Goblin. His on-again, off-again romance with Mary Jane Watson seemed trapped in a permanent cycle. It might have remained that way except for one thing—Stan Lee, the father of Spider-Man, decided that it was about time that his brainchild settled down to married life.

"One day I just said, 'Gee, he's been dating this girl long enough, it might be fun to see what the life of a superhero would be like if he had a wife.' Except for Reed Richards (of The Fantastic Four) I can't recall any individual married superheroes."

Lee has been writing the daily and Sunday newspaper strip adventures of the wall-crawler for several years (a whole batch of them were recently collected in a book). But the Spider-Man Lee writes about in his strip is approached differently than the one appearing every month in **Amazing Spider-Man**, **Web of Spider-Man** and **Peter Parker, The Spectacular Spider-Man**.

If the newspaper strip started out with Spidey fighting such super-villains as Dr. Doom and Dr. Octopus, it soon got away from that. Now Spider-Man faces menaces normally found on the front pages of the newspapers in which his adventures appear. When the wall-crawler received his new popular black and white costume in the **Secret Wars** mini-series, Lee chose not to include that change in his strip. He preferred to retain the familiar original red and blue version that Spider-Man has worn since his adventures began nearly 25 years ago. That costume is still the most recognizable to people who haven't been following the monthly comics.

"I've always been happy with the old costume," Lee states. "The new costume is fine, even very dramatic, but there's no reason for me to change it in the strip." When asked whether there was concern over continuity between the daily strip and the comic books, Lee replies, "No, because there are so many different things anyway. We don't check with each other as to what stories they're doing in the comics or what stories I'm doing in the strip. That doesn't seem to bother any of the newspaper readers and I don't imagine it bothers any of the comic book readers either."

How would Lee describe Spider-Man today, almost 25 years after he created the web-spinning hero?

"Well, he's gotten a little older and a little more mature," Lee observes. "For the newspaper strip, I think of him as being about 25 years old now, more of a mature guy. I'm trying to get the artist to draw him as being a little older. He's not the Woody Allen-ish superhero that he was when we started him. The strip is proceeding fine, " Lee adds. "Mary Jane marries Peter in June. I'm sending out the scripts to Jim Salicrup, the editor of the Spider-Man magazines, and he's going to see to it that Mary Jane and Peter marry in June in the magazine also."

THE AMAZING MICHELINIE

David Michelinie is back on the wall-crawler, although this time on **The Amazing Spider-Man**. His first issue will appear after the Gang War and Hobgoblin story concludes. Then the events begin which resolve in the wedding set for next summer's **Amazing Spider-Man Annual**.

The marriage was first announced by Stan Lee and Jim Shooter while they

SPIDER-MAN & MARY JANE

were on a convention panel.

"I'll be writing the three issues that build up to the wedding and the annual itself. The artist for the annual hasn't been decided on yet, but the team for **Amazing** will be John Romita Jr. and Bob Layton.

"In the three issues building up to the annual, Peter Parker will reassess his entire life, not only as Spider-Man but as Peter Parker; Mary Jane reassesses her life as well. He reevaluates his early goal to be a scientist. Being Spider-Man was an excuse to make a living by going out and taking pictures of himself and selling them. He comes to the conclusion that he has been Spider-Man at the expense of his other goals in life."

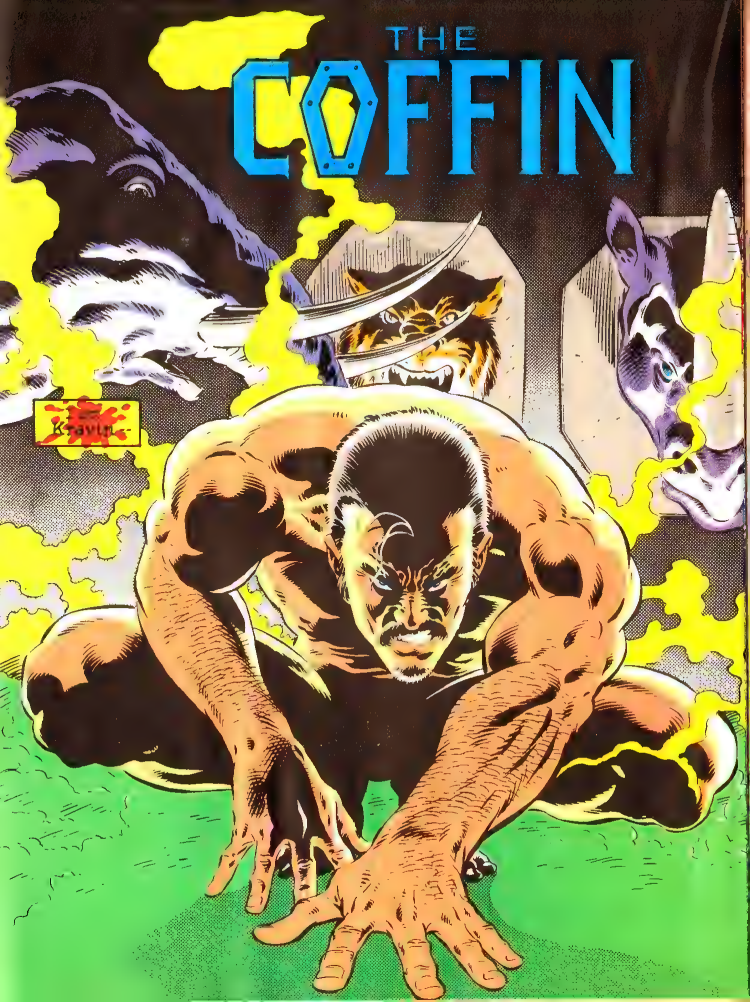
It is unusual for the wedding to occur simultaneously in newspaper and comic book. The two have never paralleled each other before.

"To my knowledge, one has never followed the course of the events in the other," Michelinie states. "But to alter the character radically by having him get married made it necessary to match up the storylines. Otherwise it would be too different. It's not like having Peter Parker break his arm or something that could be healed in a few weeks."

Although Michelinie will write a wedding story following the plot Lee will be using in the daily strip, the Spider-Man of comic books will still have his black costume while the newspaper strip will stick with the original version preferred by Stan. When asked which costume he prefers, Micheline replies, "That's a dangerous question. If we're talking about Spider-Man in person, I've seen the guy who makes personal appearances wearing both costumes and the black one really looks terrific. But for the comic book, I'm a fan from way back and I guess I still prefer the red and blue."

In recent months, plans were afoot to have a third costume, one which would have essentially been the black and white model with alterations.

The costume would be more mysterious, Michelinie reveals. "It was going to get some red highlights and outlines around the eyes. When Jim Salicrup came in as the new editor, he tossed out that idea. We're staying with the black costume. Originally the costume was going to change at the end of the two part battle with The Hobgoblin."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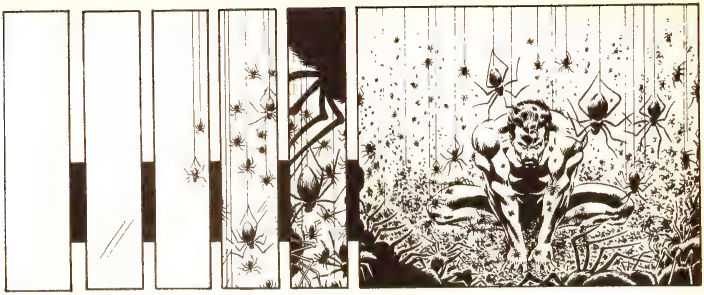
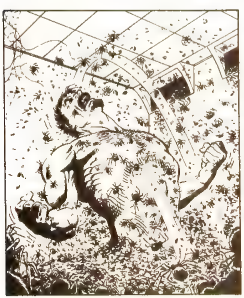




THE SPECTACULAR DE MATTEIS

Marriage won't make life any easier for Peter Parker. Right after the wedding story appears in the summer annual, Spider-Man will be involved in one of his most bizarre adventures yet, courtesy of writer J.M. De Matteis (known recently for his provocative non-superhero writing on **Moonshadow** for Marvel's Epic Comics line). While De Matteis will be considered the writer for **Peter Parker, The Spectacular Spider-Man**, his six-part story will appear in all three titles in June and July. The single story, illustrated by Mike Zeck and Bob McLeod, can then be followed from week to week.

"I'm looking at it as one long graphic novel," he explains. "All six issues are now plotted and I'm dialoguing the second issue. Mike Zeck has finished pencilling the second issue and is beginning on the third. We're in pretty good shape for this to come out next summer.

"Ordinarily I'm not that interested in writing superheroes any more, but I came up with this idea and I've been thinking about it for a long time. When it all came together, I took it to Jim Owsley. He gave me the go-ahead. I only write about superheroes when it's a story that I can work up enthusiasm over."

The story explores both the nature of the superhero and of Spider-Man. Although it involves Kraven the Hunter, it is unlike any Kraven story seen before.

"We've taken the elements latent in the character and come up with something fresh. We're trying to add more depth," De Matteis explains. "The story is about Kraven because as far as the reader knows, Spider-Man is dead and buried.

"We explore who Kraven is and what makes him the way he is. We don't flash back to his childhood but we learn that his parents brought him over after the Russian Revolution (in 1919). He's actually quite old but has kept himself young with his jungle potions. He's incredibly contradictory. On the one hand he's an aristocratic Russian lord and on the other he's a primal, animalistic being. It's that duality of character that appeals to me.

"Kraven knows that he can't live forever, and before he dies, he needs to defeat Spider-Man. To Kraven the hunt is everything. He's always defeated everything he's hunted, except for Spider-Man. He's built up Spider-Man in his mind as something distorted into what he calls The Spider. He's not even a man any more to him. He's this being, and he needs to defeat this being. It won't be enough for Kraven to kill him — he has to prove that he can be a better Spider-Man than Spider-Man is. As far as the reader knows, he blows Spider-Man away at the end of the first issue. Then, in the second, he puts on the costume and goes out to be what he believes Spider-Man is. What Kraven believes Spider-Man to be is nothing like we know him to be. In fact, what he becomes is closer to the type of superhero that, unfortunately, has become prevalent nowadays, the psychopath superhero. Spider-Man is a regular guy who has powers — he's not

Beautiful Mike Zeck work from the upcoming epic clash between Kraven and Spider-Man...

Tonight I have widened my consciousness with herbs and roots. Tonight I have immersed myself in your being... eaten of your flesh.
Tonight my mind has penetrated your essence. It feasts upon you, like maggots feasting upon a corpse.
Come to me.

Bruce Wayne who puts on a costume and becomes a maniac creature of the night.

"Obviously I'm not trying to fool anyone into thinking that Spider-Man might be dead because we know that I'm not going to kill him," De Matteis readily admits. "The whole point is that Kraven knows he's coming back, too. He wants Spider-Man to wake up in the coffin and know that Kraven did something that no one else has done. 'I killed you,' Kraven thinks, 'and not only that but I took your place and I'm better at it than you!'

"That's the basic premise of what Kraven is trying to pull off. It's going to be the last Kraven the Hunter story — he won't be coming back after this!"

THE WEB OF OWSLEY

Formerly head honcho of the Spider titles, Jim Owsley opted out for the less pressured life of a writer. Nine years on Marvel's editorial staff was enough for now. When Jim Salicrup took over as editor, he enticed Owsley back to the Spider-world, as writer of **Web of Spider-Man**.

"It's a tradition. You edit the books; then you go off and write one of them," he cheerfully observes. "Conceptually **Web of Spider-Man** is going to change. Jim's game plan and mine are decidedly different, but that's only to be expected when a new editor takes over

"I want to regain the flavor it had in the Sixties with Harry, Liz, Gwen, Mary Jane and Flash Thompson," Owsley explains. "They were all hanging out, about the same age and having the same problems. I want to get that youthful feeling back. I want to keep the stories contemporary with a hip '80s feel, I want to make it a contemporary action/adventure book with hip clothes and hip people — a very mod Spider-Man book."

One of Spider-Man's principal antagonists will be The Rose, who was recently revealed to be Richard Fisk — The Kingpin's son.

"For the first time in years, Spider-Man has a major arch-enemy who is a contemporary, since Richard Fisk is about Peter's age. While we do a character study with Peter Parker and Mary Jane on how tough it is for a young couple to make it, we're also going to look at The Rose/Richard Fisk and his own set of problems. At how tough it is for him to keep his neck above water and not become like his father. Richard Fisk doesn't like his father. The whole idea of becoming The Rose was a way to irritate his father in the near term and, in the long term, to topple his father's organization. In the course of doing it, he's becoming a criminal. So he has a conflict — do the ends justify the means?"

The recent departure of the Kingpin's wife (in the **Daredevil** graphic novel) will widen the gap between father and son in the coming stories.

That's going to be explored a bit in **Amazing Spider-Man** 288. It will fuel the fire between them a lot," Owsley continues. "Yes, mom is almost cured but father has chased her away to Europe and Richard has no idea where she is. For all he knows, he'll never see his mother again. The Kingpin is going to try to reconcile things with Richard, to hold on to what little of his humanity is left. Both of them want to stop the hurting but they're on different sides and can't

THE HOBGOBLIN REVEALED!

reconcile themselves to a compromise. The Kingpin is sludge. Richard Fisk wants to bring his father down, but Kingpin would like to convert his son and make him second in command."

SPIDEY FACES THE FACTS?

Now that he's the writer on **Web**, Owsley wants to do the things he had encouraged his writers to do when he was the editor.

"I'd like to do some obvious things that haven't been done before," he explains. "One of the stories I'm working on now deals with Spidey finding a bad guy, clouting him over the head, turning him in, waltzing off and selling his pictures to *The Bugle*. The guy Spidey corralled gets off because Spider-Man violated his civil rights. You can't just wear a mask, bop people upside the head and turn them in — even if they are caught in the middle of criminal acts. Just the fact that you perform the pseudo-arrest taints the whole bust so that the D.A. has to throw it out. So this guy is going to be a heavy thing for Spidey—to realize that there are limits to what he could do.

"There are things that Spider-Man should be aware of. He has to be careful of who he webs up and leaves hanging upside down from lamp posts. They're going to be there for the next hour. If they have a heart condition, they can die! I would like to take a very realistic look at the character, saying, 'Okay, let's enjoy the fact that he has these powers, but let's also explore some of the ramifications.' He's going to have to grow up a lot because of the wedding. He still has a lot more growing up to do before he realizes that every time he puts on that mask he takes the lives of innocent people into his hands."

That concept was explored by Peter David in **Spectacular Spider-Man** while Owsley was editor. In a story, an innocent bystander was killed by a felon Spidey was fighting.

"It was an obvious thing that had never been done before. When we did

it there was a massive outcry. Readers wrote in and said: This is supposed to be a fun comic — how can you do that? People on the Spider-Man creative staff were also divided over that. If Spider-Man is supposed to be a Joe Average who happened to get bit by a spider and not a Batman who's trained all his life, he's going to goof up sometimes. That's very rarely explored.

In the issue following the bystander's death, Peter David explored an example of Spider-Man going too far, not thinking things through to their logical conclusion. "In that issue Spider-Man wants information from this thug. He goes to the thug's house and the guy's daughter answers the door. She calls her daddy and Spider-Man grabs him and swings off while this kid is bawling. Spidey feels like a creep. Then he takes the guy to a restaurant — I thought this was brilliant because he does this riff where he puts his arm around the guy and tells him what a pal he is in front of all the thug's contemporaries essentially marking him in the underworld. On the surface, it reads one way, but where Spidey went wrong was that this guy didn't know anything and couldn't really be of any help to him. Spider-Man has no right going around marking people for death like that and we don't see enough of that. We too often see Spidey being a Bugs Bunny character who's always right, laughs a lot, does his thing and goes home. That's just not right—that's boring.

When Stan wrote Spider-Man, in the very first story Peter goofed up bad. Uncle Ben got very dead. That's how to write Spider-Man! In eleven pages in **Amazing Fantasy 15**, Stan showed us how to write Spider-Man."

SPIDER-PLANS

Wedding plans have caused a lot of fast reshuffling for the books. Issues completed for inventory use (stories completed and stored to be slotted when unavoidable deadline problems occur) will be used as much as possible before the wedding next summer. After that event they wouldn't fit into the continuity without major revisions. So while De Mattels works on his six part epic with Mike Zeck and Bob McLeod, **Peter Parker, The Spectacular Spider-Man** will consist of inventory

material. (The Kraven saga appears in issues 131&132 next summer).

One change Salicrup has made falls squarely in the realm of behind-the-scenes editorial direction, the indefinite postponement of changes to Spider-Man's black costume.

"We already have two spider costumes — one in the comic books and one in the newspaper strip. We didn't need another one," he explains. "Coming at the same time as plans for the wedding, it would have been too much at once."

There is no rule which relegates one version of the costume to the newspaper strip and the other to comic book appearances.

"The red and blue one is used in the **Spider Man Vs. Wolverine** book," Salicrup points out. "It starts out with the black costume, but when he has to get another one in Europe he winds up with a red and blue one which says Spider-Man in German on the back. So he does still have a red and blue costume if he wants to use it."

Salicrup has made one other important change in editorial direction. No title will run "darker" or different kinds of stories on an on-going basis than the other Spider-books. They're all about the same character.

Web of Spider-Man has already undergone changes. *Now Magazine* has been dropped so that Peter will not be sent to Europe on assignments independent of plotlines occuring in the other books. One forthcoming plot for **Web** includes the return of an old foe who can evade the wallcrawler's spider-sense. "Yes, and he's been in **Web** before, but if I were to reveal who it is, it would give away about half of that story!" Salicrup explains.

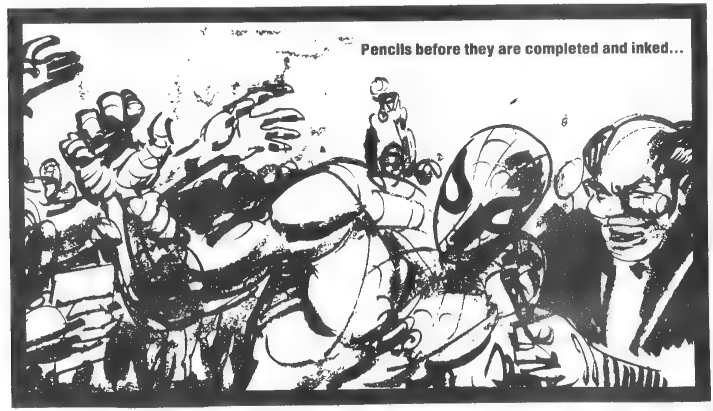
What Salicrup does reveal about **Web** are plans for next summer's annual.

"That's going to be a sort of Spider-Man Universe book. It will list the villains and supporting characters to sort everything out for people who've just recently come to the book. It will be what the early Marvel annuals were like in the Sixties, only more so." And it will be drawn by a number of different people, just as the **Marvel Universe** volumes are.

Reference to the Sixties brings to mind yet another Spider-Man title. Two issues of a **Spectacular Spider-Man** appeared as an early attempt by Marvel (in about 1968) to publish a magazine featuring a superhero. (It was 8½ x 11 in size and sold with the regular magazines.) The series didn't continue beyond the second issue but the material for the third was recently rediscovered.

"In the second issue they advertised a third issue," Salicrup informs. "Twenty pages of that had been laid out by Marie Severin and scripted by Stan. That's been finished as a forty page story which will appear in the **Peter Parker** annual. The plot will still be from the old continuity and include Gwen Stacy and all that was going on at that time. The final product will be co-plotted by Stan Lee, Marie Severin and John Romita with script by Stan, pencils by Marie and inks by John."

Each of the summer '87 annuals spotlights important events in the Spider-Man canon — his wedding, an untold story from early in his career and a guide to that now very long and complex continuity. Through it we'll be able to see how Spider-Man has grown over the years and the characters and events which helped him develop. Perhaps it will provide clues to the new and different directions his life will take after next June.



Games

BY STEVE PERRIN

My favorite comic book on the stands right now is **Watchmen**, from DC. As I said in a fan letter to its writer, Alan Moore (I *never* write fan letters any more), this is not what I read comics for, but it is what I read science fiction and mystery for.

Alan Moore has created a credible alternate superhero world. There is only one super-powered hero, the overwhelming Dr. Manhattan, and the rest of the heroic tradition is maintained by a group of costumed folk who are probably in better shape than the crooks they battle — but that's about all they have going for them. Moore is also avoiding most of the cliches of the genre. So far in five issues there has been only one actual fight pictured, as two out-of-costume retired heroes send a bunch of street punks packing. Costumed heroes are hunted as murdering vigilantes; Dr. Manhattan is a weapon in the United States arsenal; and the whole mood of the world pictured is very grim and film noir. It is the last place one expects gaudily costumed heroes. They have a hard time there, too.

But what has this to do with games, you ask? That is the name of the column, after all. No, the latest module from Mayfair for the **DC Heroes** role playing game is not **Watchmen**. Don't look for one to come from them, either. By the time one could be designed, printed and on the stands, the maxi-series will be over and the potential demand would be nil. I don't know if anyone would want to play in that particular world, with the aspect of nuclear destruction looming over it.

However, I have attempted to create a **Champions** campaign using a similar background to Moore's world, and the series of games I have run in the campaign has been very well received by my players. So I thought I would pass along some of my observations on the low-powered world and how it operates in game terms.

THE LOW-POWERED CAMPAIGN

For this campaign, a copy of Hero Games' **Danger International** is about as important as a copy of the **Champions** rules set. **Danger International** provides limits for physical characteristics and a list of extra skills which are very useful for this campaign. In fact, I sometimes refer to the campaign as **Danger International** in Spandex. In many ways it is more of a spy/crimebuster campaign rather than a standard superhero campaign, but that's the whole idea.

Since Moore allowed for one immensely powerful character in his world, I have allowed for the reality of psychic powers. I limited them rigidly, but it is possible for a crimefighter to read a mind (with difficulty), lift an object with telekinesis (and a lot of effort), have uncontrollable precognitive flashes or otherwise act beyond the ordinary limits of human abilities. I have even postulated an exceptional psionically-powered hero who gained his powers in the Fifties, but has since disappeared.

But all the rest of the superpowerd paraphenalia is gone. There are no mutants, no aliens, no magical creatures. If someone steps into an atomic reactor, they die.

It is possible to build an armored suit like Iron Man's, but the cost is tremendous. Characters have to stick to something like current technology, though it is permissible to use equipment out of a speculative Sunday supplement. assume miniaturization beyond even what can be done today (a good trick) and generally push the limits of modern technology.

I've also limited body armor by saying only a certain amount can be put into a costume and the costume still be considered a regular superhero costume. More than that certain amount, and the person is obviously wearing armor. This isn't much of a limitation for a hero who just charges into the nearest bank robbery, but it can certainly slow down someone trying to operate incognito.

Incognito is the name of the game. One aspect of the Moore universe I have taken is the congressional law banning freelance superheroes. In my campaign any superhero who is not working directly for the police or other law enforcement agency is a rogue, to be hunted down and captured by any police agency that runs into one. This makes things difficult for the hero who wants to trample on crime untrammeled by the niceties of the rules of evidence and the Miranda decision.

I gave my players the choice of being connected with a government agency or working as a rogue. Almost all took rogues. There are even a couple of government employees who are rogues when they can slip away and put on their costumes.

This kind of campaign puts a lot of stress on the Gamemaster. I don't have a nice simple superhero group to deal with. I can't just say, "As you are sitting in your headquarters, the viewscreen receiver is suddenly filled with the face of Chief Henderson. He says that the Purple Gang is raiding the Fifteenth National Bank and asks for assistance."

No, things are a lot more complex than that. I have ameliorated things somewhat by setting up a group of old heroes called the Hero Alliance (sorry about that, Sirius Comics) who are a lobbyist group attempting to get the anti-vigilante laws appealed. Messages can be routed through this organization, but they don't want to get busted for supporting an illegal activity. Think of them as being similar to NORML. They promote an illegal activity by calling the illegality unconstitutional, but they don't dare be caught dealing with the stuff.

But mostly, my happy crew of rogues are wandering about, each on their own, and I have to bring each one into the plot thread every evening we play. This is fun, provides lots of scope for role playing and makes for a real challenge. But it also eats up the playing time. I have to plan the games around the role playing, rather than the combats, because there is often no time for a serious combat. None of the players are complaining.

I recommend this style of play, particularly for players who generally play in very high-powered campaigns where all the characters are matches for Thor or Iron Man or Green Lantern. It's really enlightening for a player to be in a situation where he really does have to worry about the crook with the auto-rifle.

SUPER AGENTS AND GADGETS

This more or less leads us into a new book from Hero Games via Iron Crown Enterprises (who now publish all the Hero Games materials). I mentioned **Super Agents** some time back. Now, after much travail, it has finally hit the market.

I have a hard time being objective about this book — after all, I edited it. Suffice it to say that it has all the rules you need to make the skin tight costumes and exotic powers of **Champions** merge with the high tension and deadly intrigue of **Danger International.** Super Agents is a good

description of such comic book stalwarts as SHIELD and THUNDER. I use a lot of it in my "**Watchmen**"-style campaign, including the writeup on the supervillainous agency known as Raven. Those of you who remember the old *Man From Uncle* TV show, books, etc. may see some similarities with another bird-named villain organization...

I strongly recommend this book for anyone with an interest in the super agent in **Champions**. I don't even get a royalty.

And while I'm touting books I've edited, I might as well mention that the **Gadgets** book is out, from the same people. This book is chock-full of super-gadgets mostly designed to give the minor villainous agent a potent threat against a superhero without completely blowing any hero away. As author Andy Robinson points out, too powerful an assortment of super-weapons would cut down the superhero population rather drastically, and generally change the focus of a superhero campaign.

Again, since I edited the book, I can't be too laudatory. I do note that all of the various point totals (so important in **Champions**) for the gadgets were worked out very carefully. I checked them, the author re-checked them and Hero System originator George McDonald re-re-checked them. They are *right*.

THE ENVELOPE PLEASE...

For the last couple of columns I've mentioned the recent national game convention, Origins, which took place over Fourth of July weekend in Los Angeles. One of the attractions of this convention is the awarding of two sets of prizes for best games introduced during the past year.

One set of awards is named the Charles Roberts Awards, and honors creators of boardgames — mostly wargames featuring modern day and historical battles. There is a science fiction and fantasy category, but the traditional boardgamer is usually impatient with fantasy of any type, no matter what scientific trappings it might have.

Charles Roberts was the designer of **Tactics II**, the game which can safely be said to have launched the board wargames hobby. He was also the first president of Avalon Hill, still the giant in the boardgame industry.

The other set of awards are called the H. G. Wells Awards. They are named after the first modern populizer of miniatures games — games that use metal (sometimes plastic in these degenerate days) figures to symbolize regiments which maneuver for battle on table tops or (for really major battles or really large figures) on floors. Oh yes, he was also an ardent Socialist and innovative early science fiction writer.

This kind of thing had been going on for centuries, chess evolved from early versions; but Wells was the first to popularize playing with miniatures in a book aptly titled **Little Wars**. It seemed only proper to name an award series for miniatures gaming after him.

When role-playing games came along, the "Powers-That-Be" in the gaming industry determined that they were closer to miniatures than board gaming, so Mr. Wells got to add them to his category. Lucky him.

What's all this exposition about? The latest winner of Best Role Playing Rules was **DC Heroes** from Mayfair Games. I wrote a laudatory review of this game some columns back and have gone so far as to do a **Firestorm** module for the system. It should be out by the time you read this. Look for **An Element of Danger**.

There are some very innovative elements to **DC Heroes**, and it deserves its victory. But there are a few problems that have come to my attention since I have run several additional games after I did my review and wrote my module. Let's try to deal with the principal one.

HERO POINTS

Every **DC Heroes** character has Hero Points. The character is initially created with Hero Points, and every adventure of any kind bestows anywhere from 25 to 200 more Hero Points on the character. These extra points can be used to increase the powers and skills of the character, but their main use is to be expended to either increase the abilities of the character temporarily, or save the hero from certain death.

There is a limit to the number of Hero Points that can be expended. If a character with a Strength of 7 (capable of lifting an elephant of 3 tons) wishes to lift a DC-9 airplane (25 tons), he can spend 3 Hero Points and increase his Strength to 10, which is enough to lift the DC-9. He could, in fact, expand his Strength to 14 (enough to lift a loaded C-5A, 240 tons), double his starting Strength, but no further. This costs 7 Hero Points.

Alfred the Butler has a Strength of 2, normal for a man in this game. He could spend two Hero Points (he has 10) and be able to lift 700 lbs. This is probably enough to lift the Bat-Computer to dust it. He could try to "Push" his Strength (a game mechanic I won't go into, but he has at least a 50% chance of success), and then spend Hero Points equal to the Pushed total, and be able to lift the Batmobile to dust under that. In the high ranges, this really gets ridiculous. Green Lantern has a Force Manipulation of 25. He can spend 25 Hero Points and get a Force Manipulation of 50. An office skyscraper has a Body (which can be affected by Force Manipulation) of 29. Sheesh.

And what happens when Superman (pre-Byrne) starts spending Hero Points on his Strength, which starts at 50?

In the games I've run, the most Hero Points any character has burned in an adventure was about 75. The usual final total of Hero Points a character can gain from an adventure is around 100.

If you want to devise a **DC Heroes** character who has the abilities of the comics originals, you have two options: You can put him at half the value he seems to exhibit in the comics, with the expectation of spending Hero Points

every time he has to match the feats shown in the comics, or you build him so that he can do these feats as a matter of course, so that by spending Hero Points he acts far tougher than his original.

The main problem here is the cheapness of Hero Points. I think the current rule of 1 (one) Hero Point gets an increase of 1 (one) point in an Attribute, Power or Skill is a problem, particularly when the Attribute, Power or Skill is already high. It was done this way, I'm sure, for simplicity's sake — which should always be a consideration with role playing games. However, if the players have any competence at all with numbers, try charging either (Plan A) twice the Hero Points to get the point increase (2 gets 1, 4 gets 2, etc.) or (Plan B) the square of the increase (1 gets 1, 4 gets 2, 9 gets 3, etc.). Either way still allows the character to boost himself slightly several times, but seriously penalizes the character who wants to continually operate at twice his supposed level throughout a game. If Green Lantern wants to double his power, he must spend at least 50 points (using Plan A) or a thoroughly prohibitive 625 points (using Plan B).

KING OF CRIME

King of Crime starts with an interesting premise. The Secret Society of Super Villains has seen that Central City is wide open with the death of the Flash. What a chance for villainy to run free!

The Player Character Heroes must stop such old Central City fixtures as Captain Cold, Golden Glider, Mirror Master and the Pied Piper, plus refugees from other heroes such as Cheetah, Shadow Thief, Chronos and Matter Master, from running wild in Central City. Author Jeff O'Hare has set up a series of master thefts, each set in a particular theme, for the master criminals to perform as they try out for entry into the august, if criminal, body they wish to join.

There are a few problems...

Mirror Master died in the Crisis, just like the Flash did. Yet here he is. Does anyone at Mayfair read the comics they are modelling? It wouldn't have taken much to substitute the Weather Wizard or some other old Flash Foe.

The module is meant for beginning characters, as is very obvious from the situations presented. If anything goes wrong for the villains, most of them have no way of getting away from the heroes. Hardly any of them have any decent movement powers.

What's worse, the heroes are supposed to go through three encounters, then get threatened with the city being blown up, solve this explosive situation, and only then get the clue to find the main villain hideout. But all the villains know where the hideout is. If any of the heroes have a decent Mind Probe ability, the heroes will know almost instantly after capturing the villain where to go to get the leader and the rest of the gang.

Oh well, I did use Infinity Inc. as the heroes rather than new characters.My players also figured out all the clues before I could finish reading them. Maybe a bunch of inexperienced (with any game, not just **DC Heroes**) players with brand new characters would find this one a challenge. My players certainly didn't. You do get a nice list of new villains for other use, though.

Something that confused me got straightened out with a call to Mayfair's offices. Many of the gadgets listed for the villains have Hero Point costs given for them. Anyone familiar with the rules knows that Gadgets aren't built with Hero Points. However, it would seem that it is possible to use Hero Points to "purchase" a gimmick one cannot build. This is in the very large Gamemaster's book for the game, and I missed it. Now you know.

CF

STEVE PERRIN is the creator of the Elfquest RuneQuest and Superworld games along with scores of modules and other related material

WHERE TO INQUIRE

Super Agents and Gadgets — Iron Crown Enterprises Inc. P.O. Box 1605, Charlottesville, VA 22902

DC Heroes and **King of Crime** — Mayfair Games, P.O. Box 48539, Niles, IL 60648

RON GOULART

FEMALE FUNNIES
PART I

FLYIN' JENNY

Because comic strips have been equal opportunity employers from just about the beginning, a multitude of ladies have starred in features of their own over the years. There've been working girls such as Tillie the Toiler and Winnie Winkle, shrewd housewives including Blondie and Dotty Dripple and distaff daredevils such as Miss Fury and Wonder Woman. In our new series we'll be surveying the comic page careers of an assortment of these women, ranging from show girls to sob sisters.

To launch the series we take a look at a young woman who found adventure both on the land and in the air.

Although Amelia Earhart flew the Atlantic alone in 1932 and Jacqueline Cochran won the Bendix Trophy in 1938, a girl aviator didn't get to solo in her own comic strip until the autumn of 1939. **Flyin' Jenny**, offering separate continuities daily and Sunday, was by Russell Keaton. The daily opened with pretty blonde Jenny Dare winging over the Starcraft Aviation Factory and impressing everybody with her skills, which included "coming in for a landing — *upside down!*" A feisty, independant young woman, Jenny talked herself into a job as a test pilot for Starcraft. This led to her life being filled with intrigue, sabotage, shipwreck, murder, violence and romance — the usual components of a fictional pilot's life.

The first Sunday sequence found Jenny, "daring girl pilot," based at the Airdale Airport and getting ready for The Trans-American Trophy Race. She was flying a plane designed by her handsome friend Rick Davis. Things didn't go smoothly, though, what with gamblers wrecking the plane, competition from a fat, brash pilot named Spinner Martin and the entry of a mystery woman.

Russell Keaton was a graduate of **Buck Rogers** and **Skyroads** and was a few hours of flying time away from his own pilot's license when **Jenny** started. Keaton — his nickname was Buster — had come up to Chicago from his hometown of Corinth, Mississippi, in the later 1920s to study art. While still in his teens he got a job with Dick Calkins. "Keaton's childhood dreams had been similar to mine," recalls Zack Mosley, creator of **Smilin' Jack**, who also worked for Calkins. "We were finally drawing aeroplanes but we had never mustered the courage to ride in one, much less become pilots. We began to feel like hypocrites...One day after a local air show, a pilot was taking passengers up in one of the first huge Curtiss Condors. Keaton and I threw caution to the winds and got into the thing." This was Keaton's first flight. As an assistant to Calkins he drew the **Buck Rogers** Sunday page and had a good deal to do with the **Skyroads** dailies. He took over the latter feature completely in the early 1930s and was allowed to sign it.

When he sold **Jenny** to the Bell Syndicate, he was living again in Corinth. Initially Keaton wrote the continuities himself, then Frank Wead came in to do the scripts. Wead, a former Navy pilot and author of the scripts for such movies as **Hell Divers** and **Blaze of Noon**, was later the subject of the John Wayne movie, **The Wings of Eagles**. During the war Gleen Chaffin, the co-creator of **Tailspin Tommy**, took over the writing. "Out of the blue Wead was recalled to the Navy to teach celestial navigation and had to give up **Jenny**," Chaffin once told me. "I took it up almost in the middle of a sequence, but Wead had quite a bit of action mapped out." Chaffin was living in Montana at the time. He and Keaton never met. "Keaton was wonderful to work for and with. We handled the whole thing by phone and correspondence."

Keaton drew in an attractive, uncluttered and slightly cartoony style. As the strip progressed he swung to a more illustrative approach. While he never got as realistic as Milton Caniff or Noel Sickles, he was nevertheless very good at depicting the airplanes and weaponry the strip required. His Jenny Dare was an attractive character and, unlike her male contemporaries in the aviation game, she often appeared in her undies. Jennie was frequently seen lounging in her nightie or slipping into something more comfortable. In one memorable Sunday episode she bailed out of her ailing plane, parachuting to safety. On the trip to earth she managed to lose her flying suit and made an impressive landing in her bra and panties. The Sunday page also included paper dolls — under the title **Jenny's Style Show** — at least once per month.

The daily strip grew increasingly serious and soon after the United States entered World War II Jenny began flying missions for Army Intelligence. She teamed up with a plump darkhaired lady newspaper photographer named Babe Woods. By 1943 the two of them were involved in combat missions in Europe. Several fellows, military and

civilian, fell in love with Jenny but she had little time for romance. Rick, now a major, was the closest thing to a steady beau but duty kept them apart most of the time. The chubby Babe fared better domestically, marrying and settling down just as the war came to a close in 1945.

For most of the life of the feature Jenny lived a separate life in the Sunday page. Rick Davis shared this parallel world, but Babe was nowhere to be seen. Jenny never got to Europe on Sunday, her contribution to the war effort being the organizing of a "bird-girl shuttle command" to fly essential cargo. Her most frequent sidekick was an impish orphan kid named Cyril "Red" Richmint and the hefty Spinner Martin recurred as a, sometimes friendly, rival. In 1944 Keaton and Chaffin introduced a long Sunday sequence that took Jenny and Red to South America to protect a rubber plantation from sabotage.

Soon after **Flyin' Jenny** got going, Marc Swayze joined Keaton as an assistant. Swayze was also a southerner, and he held a B.A. and a Master's Degree in art. He left the assisting job in 1940 to go with Fawcett comics in Manhattan. There he drew stories involving various members of the Captain Marvel family, including the first adventures of Mary Marvel. During the war Keaton became a flying instructor and the Bell Syndicate asked Swayze to help out on the Sunday page. Prior to this Gladys Parker, who'd drawn a panel called **Flapper Fanny** and was then producing the **Mopsy** panel, had ghosted the daily and Sunday **Flyin' Jenny** for several weeks. She wasn't much good at airplanes, but her pretty girls were okay.

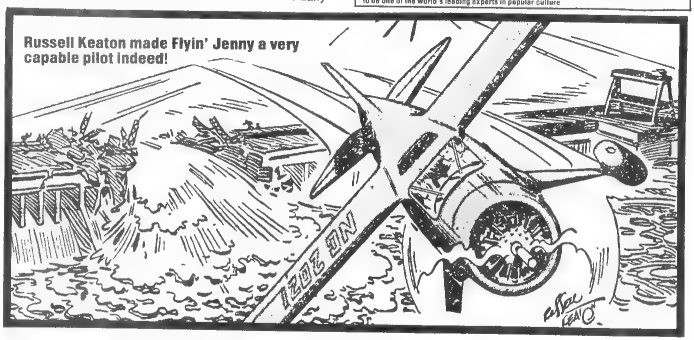
Agreeing to take on the Sunday page, Swayze moved back home to Louisiana. "Some time later Russell called me saying he was going into the hospital briefly," Swayze once told me, "and wondering if I would take over the daily strip for a week or two...Before the two weeks were up, his wife, Virginia, called and asked if I would continue the daily a while longer, since Russell would be in the hospital longer than expected. Her next call was to tell me he was dead, of a tremendously fast acting cancer." Keaton died on February 13, 1945. He was thirty five.

Flyin' Jenny continued, with Chaffin and Swayze, into the postwar period. One of the stories was concerned with Jenny's attempts to adjust to the civilian world. After cashing in her last war bond, Jenny makes her rounds of possible employers. She is told, "Sorry, Jenny, pilots are a dime a dozen." Jenny did manage to have a few more adventures, including one that involved hidden Nazi loot and a treasure island. Red Richmint made his first appearance in the dailies for this extravaganza, getting a whole strip of his own to introduce him.

In July of 1946 Jenny and Red save a young girl from kidnappers. When the girl offers her a handsome reward, Jenny replies, "Life isn't meant to be that easy! All I ask is the right to live in a free country — with the right to earn my own living in my own way!" With that the strip folded. "Somewhat mysteriously," Swayze felt, "as it seemed to be doing very well." According to Chaffin, however, the strip was finally discontinued because the syndicate and the Keaton family couldn't get together on terms for continuing it. "Too bad," said Chaffin, "it was a nice feature and one of the happiest writing experiences I've ever had."

CF

RON GOULART is co-creator of the Star Hawks comic strip along with Gil Kane. He has over 140 books to his name along with various articles in major publications in too many fields to mention. He has won awards for mystery, science fiction and western stories and is considered to be one of the world's leading experts in popular culture.



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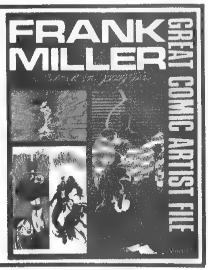

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SILVER AGE

BY WILL MURRAY

Not many people realize it, but when the Marvel Age of Comics really got going around 1964, not all of Stan Lee's heroes were new creations or Golden Age retreads. One actually had been cavorting in his own magazine since 1948 making him, at that time, Marvel's longest-running continuing hero.

Not many realize this because the character was Kid Colt.

Marvel's Western characters have been notoriously ignored despite their importance to the company. In fact, it was Marvel's Western characters, probably more than anything, which kept that company afloat through the grim Fifties.

Kid Colt got his start in **Kid Colt Outlaw** dated August, 1948. The comic continued, unbroken, to March, 1968. And the character was so popular that he simultaneously appeared in a second title, **All-Western**. Under different titles, **All-Western** featured Kid Colt until, as **Gunsmoke Western**, it expired in 1963. The artist who seems to have drawn about 95 percent of the zillions of Kid Colt stories was Jack Keller, who doesn't seem to have done any comics that didn't feature that character.

Kid Colt was not really an outlaw. He was born Blaine Colt, of Abiline, Wyoming. A hot-tempered teenager, he was so fast on the draw that he never wore his guns for fear of having to kill during unavoidable gunfights. But when owlhoot Lash Larribee guns down Blaine's father, Dan, the lad straps on his father's Colts and in a fair fight, annihilates Lash. One of Lash's boys tells the sheriff it was cold blooded murder. Because Blaine was considered a gunshy milksop, his story was not believed. Blaine fled on his grey pony, Steel, and became the Robin Hood fugitive in the red shirt and white cowhide vest known as Kid Colt.

Reliable information is hard to come by, but as near as I've been able to research, the Kid Colt who got his start in 1948 is the same Kid Colt whom I first encountered, flushed with enthusiasm for the then-new Marvel line, in 1964. This is more than can be said for his two companion kids, the Two-Gun Kid and the Rawhide Kid.

According to Overstreet's **Price Guide** — not always a reliable reference tool — the first issue of **Two-Gun Kid** was dated March, 1948. But this is not the same Two-Gun Kid Marvel was publishing in the early Sixties. I discovered this fact by accident when, while trading comics with a friend back around 1965, I got a 1960 copy of **Two-Gun Kid**. To my amazement, this Two-Gun Kid wasn't the masked town-tamer I knew, but a singing blond cowboy all duded up in black. I couldn't figure it out.

What had happened was that the original Two-Gun Kid, after running in his own title from 1948 to 1961, had been cancelled. But in 1962, Stan Lee, as he was doing with characters like Sub-Mariner and the Human Torch, had revived the name, but completely revamped the character.

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ALL RIGHT, COLT! YOU'VE GOT A MIGHTY BIG REP... LET'S SEE IF YUH CAN LIVE UP TO IT!!
YOU JUST TEND TO YOUR OWN SHOOTIN', RAWHIDE! I'VE GOT A WAY OF KINDA LETTIN' PEOPLE KNOW I'M AROUND!
AND, WATCH OUT FOR IRON MASK! NO MATTER HOW FAST YOU DRAW, OR HOW STRAIGHT YOU SHOOT, THAT ARMOR OF HIS GIVES HIM THE EDGE!
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The first Two-Gun Kid was a footloose cowboy who rode a horse he called Cyclone. His real name was Clay Harder, and he earned the nickname Two-Gun Kid when, after Bull Yaeger and his cowpokes shot his father in an attempt to steal the family ranch, Clay went gunning for the killers. His wizardry with twin guns defeated the entire bunch, and a friendly sheriff dubbed him the Two-Gun Kid. He took the name to heart and rode the West hunting owlhoots.

When Lee reactivated the title, he turned the character into a kind of cross between Lone Ranger and Daredevil — except Lee hadn't yet created Daredevil. Matt Hawk was the town of Tombstone's peacable lawyer. But at night he dons a black gunslinger's outfit much like that of his earlier namesake — except he also wears a brown cowhide vest and black domino mask to conceal his identity. He fought outlaws as an official lawman, aided by strongman Boom-Boom Brown — a character anticipating Sgt. Fury's Dum-Dum Dugan. Two-Gun's black stallion, Thunder, also had a dual identity. He pretended to be a swayback nag whenever Hawk rode him.

Lee gave the job of drawing the new Two-Gun to no less than Jack Kirby, who had briefly handled the old version in his final issues. Before that Al Hartley and John Severin were most identified with the strip. Later, Dick Ayers did the honors.

A similar transformation happened to **The Rawhide Kid.** That title ran 16 issues from March, 1955 to September, 1957. The original Rawhide was a cowpoke who wore a buckskin jacket and rode with a kid sidekick named Randy Clayton. Somewhere along the line, he got a new black outfit with a Texas Ranger-style buttoned tunic.

But in August, 1960 — a year before **The Fantastic Four** — Lee reactivated the title. The new version seemed to be the same red-headed character, except his black outfit suffered minor changes and the character was drawn as a bantam-sized fireball where Dick Ayers — the original artist — had depicted a strapping six-footer.

This character's real name was Johnny Bart and, like Kid Colt, he was a fugitive. The lone survivor of a wagon train attack, Johnny was adopted by an old ex-Texas Ranger named Ben Bart, who taught him to shoot. When Bart was bushwhacked, Johnny went gunning for his killer. After that, he had a rep as a fast draw. Later, he drew first in a gun fight and was accused of murder. Instead of standing trial, he turned fugitive. He got the nickname Rawhide Kid because he grew up in Rawhide, Texas. There's no reason to believe that the fugitive Rawhide is the same character from the Fifties, but neither is there any cause to doubt it. The buckskin version's Christian name isn't mentioned in any of the stories I've read.

Jack Kirby once boasted that one of his **Rawhide Kid** issues had actually outsold the rest of the Marvel line. I can believe it. This strip was among Kirby's best work of that period. His Rawhide Kid was an angry whirlwind — riding, shooting, fighting in stories of such violent fury that they make his early **Fantastic Fours** seem as slow as **Millie The Model**.

The issue that sold so well was probably the one in which Rawhide battled a giant Totem pole that came to life. This story would have been more at home in **Tales to Astonish**, but Marvel's Westerns enjoyed a brief flirtation with their popular monster formula around 1960. One issue of the original **Two-Gun Kid** found the Kid at odds with a giant lizard — but it turned out to be a giant bison in a lizard suit. Don't ask how.

The Rawhide Kid's origin was revised and expanded in issue 45. By this time, Kirby had relinquished the art chores to Larry Leiber, who would become strongly identified with the character as both artist and writer during the book's last years.

It seems that the Kid discovered that he had two brothers who had survived the Indian raid that claimed his parents. His real name turned out to be Johnny Clay. One brother, Frank, was a cardsharp. The other, Joe, had become a sheriff to atone for his cowardice in running away from the Indian attack that killed their parents. It was quite a family.

The glory days for the three kids was roughly 1963-65, when enclosed in some gorgeous Jack Kirby/Dick Ayers covers, the trio fought Wild West-vintage supervillains.

Kid Colt seemed to encounter them more frequently than the other two. He even had one recurring villain, a kind of frontier Doctor Doom named Iron Mask. Colt first encountered Iron Mask in issue 110. He was a blacksmith who encased his head and chest in a bulletproof iron protector. He was an unbeatable gunman — until Kid Colt disarmed him with a couple of well-placed shots to his unprotected arms.

Iron Mask — his real name was never revealed — broke jail a few issues later in new blue armor that protected hs entire body. Colt tricked him into fording a river and his suit rusted. Every time Iron Mask came back, Kid Colt figured out a new way of stopping him. Once, Iron Mask got a trio of Colt's old foes, Dr. Danger, Mr. Brown and the Fat Man, together and formed a circus of crime — a favorite Stan Lee plot — but even that wasn't enough.

A number of Lee's frontier supervillains were actually revivals of Golden Age Timely characters. In **Rawhide Kid** 38, Rawhide tangled with the Red Raven, a character loosely based upon the 1940 superhero. This guy was outlaw "Red" Raven. The Kid put him in jail, which he shared with a dying Navajo medicine man. It seems this medicine man discovered a magic cloth. He sews a pair of crimson wings, makes him exercise his arms and soon "Red" Raven is winging his way to freedom in a purple-and-scarlet bird suit. Red Raven goes after the Kid. Luckily Rawhide meets up with the Navajo's son and is armed with a pair of white wings. After history's first aerial gunfight, Rawhide burns both sets of wings.

The Two-Gun Kid encountered Hurricane — another Timely-inspired villain — in issue 70 of his magazine. Outlaw Harry Kane flees into the desert to escape Two-Gun's wrath. There, he bushwhacks an Indian witch doctor who is brewing a potion that will impart great speed to his tribe. Thirsty, Harry drinks the brew — despite the fact that it's just been struck by lightning. Kane quickly discovers that he can outrun a cougar and slap leather like lightning. That's right, he's got superspeed. Dressing in a purple outfit with thunderbolts on his chest, he renames himself Hurricane and goes after Two-Gun. Guess who wins.

Other unusual villains from this period seem to have been variations of regular Marvel bad guys. The Rattler was a green-clad gunman who vaguely resembles Thor's archfoe, the Cobra. The Rattler fought the Rawhide Kid in issue 37, then having learned his lesson, plagued the Two-Gun Kid four years later. Two-Gun once shot it out with a character who anticipated the Black Panther. He was simply the Panther, and except for the purple color of his tights he strongly resembled the Black Panther. There was also a Scorpion who fought the Rawhide Kid. If you squinted your eyes, he resembled Spider-Man's foe of that name, but not by much.

One interesting Two-Gun Kid villain was the Purple Phantom. He was kind of a takeoff on Dick Ayers' old M.E. Comics character, the Ghost Rider. Both wore phosphorescent outfits and black-lined capes which enabled them to do ghostly things with their glowing bodies, such as make their own heads disappear or seem

to float free. Dick Ayers drew that issue of **Two-Gun Kid**, so it seems to have been a matter of the artist digging into his old bag of tricks.

In 1966, Ayers and Stan Lee revived the old Ghost Rider, with certain changes. For the title's run, the Ghost Rider fought masked supervillains like the Tarantula and Stingray almost exclusively. But the new Ghost Rider never caught on the way the three Kid cowboys did.

Obviously, readers loved Western characters with the word "Kid" in their nicknames. And there was great audience appeal in a character who roamed the West, fighting outlaws and eluding the law, while searching for peace. The obvious inspiration for Marvel's outlaw heroes was the legendary Billy the Kid, and in the Fifties, the company had a whole corral of such characters — The Western Kid, The Ringo Kid, The Apache Kid and The Outlaw Kid. But this formula wasn't original with Marvel. In the Twenties there had been a pulp magazine called **Wild West Weekly** which featured a small posse of wronged cowpokes with names like the Whistlin' Kid, the Silver Kid, Kid Wolf, the Oklahoma Kid and others too numerous to mention.

It was probably inevitable, given Marvel's great success with crossover and team-ups in their superhero books, that the various Kids would run into one another. Did they ever!

The first team-up occured in **Rawhide Kid** 40, in 1964, where he encountered the Two-Gun Kid. In a typical Marvel mix-up, the Two-Gun Kid goes gunning for Rawhide, but they end up teaming up against a stagerobber who masquerades as a grizzly bear. The two Kids part as friends.

A year later, Rawhide turned up in the pages of **Kid Colt Outlaw**. Colt's old Nemesis, manhunter Sam Hawk, has slapped him in jail. When Rawhide shows up in town to warn everybody that Colt's other great enemy, Iron Mask, is on the loose again, Hawk claps him into an adjoining cell.

You'd think that the two fugitive Kids would become friends. Not in the Marvel Universe.

"So you're Kid Colt!" Rawhide sneers. "You don't look like much to me!"

"Same goes for you, Rawhide," Colt answers.

But when Colt breaks jail, Rawhide follows. They fight for a few pages and then team up to beat Iron Mask. They part friends.

In **Kid Colt** 125, November, 1965, Colt is forced to help Silas Kane's outlaws rob a bank. When the robbers ditch Colt, he's brought in by Two-Gun Kid, who recommends the services of lawyer Matt Hawk. Two-Gun liked to throw work his alter-ego's way. The true culprits are revealed, and the two Kids part friends.

After that, about once a year, two of the trio teamed up. Kid Colt showed up in **Rawhide Kid** 50 when The Masquerader impersonated the real Colt. The Rawhide Kid turned up in the pages of **Two-Gun Kid** 85 and, without any preliminary fighting they teamed up to clear Rawhide's name.

You'd think by that time, all three Kids would be on excellent terms. Someone should have told writer Gary Friedrich, who scripted "Three Rode Together," in **Two-Gun Kid** 89, September, 1967. When Kid Colt finds a wounded Rawhide Kid at the scene of a stagecoach robbery — Rawhide had tried to prevent it — the Two-Gun Kid, happens to ride up. He assumes they're both guilty and takes them in. Funny thing is none of the outlaw Kids seem to recognize Two-Gun. Or he, them.

This is an example of what is known as discontinuity. Writer Friedrich apparently never boned up on past Kid crossovers. No matter. The plot of this story is much the same as the earlier encounters. The Kids fight. They join forces to capture the real culprits. And they part friends.

There were other team-ups over the years. Especially after **Kid Colt Outlaw** and **Two-Gun Kid** were cancelled in 1968. Colt turned up in several issues of **The Rawhide Kid**, riding the outlaw trail, seeking that elusive pardon, and trying to hold onto his trademark.

But you can't keep a good cowboy down for long. In the early Seventies, when Marvel went reprint-happy, the two orphaned Kids came back in a reprint book called **The Mighty Marvel Western**. Because of their rather checkered histories, the reprint editors had their hands full. They reprinted an assortment of original Two-Gun Kid stories with a mask and cowhide vest drawn over the old Kid's costume. It was rather silly, inasmuch as no one in the stories seemed to take notice of the mask. Later, they stopped doctoring the art and included a note that claimed these were stories of Matt Hawk's wandering days. But they forgot to change the old Kid's blond hair to Hawk's brown locks.

Marvel also pulled a few of the buckskin-clad Rawhide Kid stories out of the files and reprinted them with a spurious note that claimed that at one point in his life, Rawhide found a place where he wasn't wanted and did some honest ranching. It may even have been true.

Kid Colt, because he never changed, didn't have to suffer any such indignity. But in one issue of **Mighty Marvel Western**, they somehow managed to color his familiar red shirt, blue.

Except for reprints, the Kids last rode into the sunset when **The Rawhide Kid** was cancelled in 1979. The character was revived in a brief mini-series not long ago, which put a period to his career.

Westerns have fallen on pretty hard times these days, so it's not very likely that we'll be seeing Marvel's three greatest Western heroes in action any time soon. But you never know. The irony is that these once-important characters are now the most neglected in the whole Marvel universe. An argument could be made that the first stirrings of the Marvel Age of Comics began with the 1960 revitalization of **The Rawhide Kid** and the introduction of the new **Two-Gun Kid** in 1962. But in the world of comics, cowboys don't get any respect, so the important place Colt, Two-Gun and Rawhide hold in the history of Marvel Comics is simply ignored.

CF

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HAWKMAN

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BY JAMES VAN HISE

The sound of mighty wings beating the air is the signal that Hawkman and Hawkgirl are searching the skies for criminals and evil-doers! But who are these winged wonders? How did they gain their strange powers? And— who is the awesome being that fills their days and nights with danger and alarm — its strange and eerie powers making it invulnerable? Get set for a high-flying adventure as Hawkman and Hawkgirl join forces to battle the incredible.

The Brave & The Bold #34 (1961)

The Silver Age of Comics officially began in 1956 when D.C. decided it was time to start populating their books with superheroes again. By 1961, new versions of The Flash and Green Lantern had been introduced to band together with Superman, Batman, Wonder Woman, Aquaman and the completely new character J'Onn J'Onzz (the Martian Manhunter) to form the Justice League of America. With superheroes grabbing more and more attention as the Sixties were ushered in, it was inevitable that more modern incarnations of Golden Age favorites would follow. Before the new decade was even a year old, 1960 saw the revival of Hawkman.

Hawkman may never have had his own title in the Forties the way The Flash and others did, but he was nonetheless very visible in every issue of **Flash Comics** (1-104) as well as being the only character to appear in every Justice Society of America story in **All-Star Comics**.

The original Hawkman is Carter Hall, a wealthy playboy (that seemed to be a prerequisite for donning a flashy costume in those days) who is the reincarnation of an Egyptian warrior. That explained his fascination with using weapons of the past to fight criminals of the present. Hawkman also used a belt of rare anti-gravity metal (called Ninth Metal) to enable him and his girlfriend, Shierra Sanders (Hawkgirl), to fly. During his flights in the Forties, The Hawk (as he was often called then) would change his head gear several times. His exploits were illustrated by such talents as Dennis Neville, Sheldon "Shelly" Moldoff and Everett Raymond Kinstler. While Kinstler was obviously influenced by Alex Raymond, Moldoff fell back on outright swipes, including very recognizable poses borrowed from the classic newspaper strips of Raymond, Hal Foster and Burne Hogarth. Late in his career, The Hawk fell into the already excellent hands of a young Joe Kubert.

HAWKMAN'S ROOST

When DC decided to revive Hawkman, they turned the job over to the writer who had created the original version in 1939, Gardner Fox.

"It was with great delight that I learned of the decision to renew publication of Hawkman after an interval of some 13 years," Fox stated in an editorial in **Brave & Bold** 34 (Feb. —

March, 1961). "Hawkman was created almost at the same time as was the original Flash, for both characters made their initial appearances in **Flash Comics** No. 1, dated January 1940. For over 100 consecutive issues of this magazine, Hawkman battled such evildoers and criminals as The Humingbird, The Raven, The Hit Shot, Simple Simon, The Ghost, among many others.

"The current Hawkman differs somewhat from Hawkman No. 1," said Fox, refering to the original version of the character. "'He is a policeman, first of all — though from another planet. Shierra is now his wife — while in the original she was Shierra Sanders, Carter's girlfriend as well as his aide, Hawkgirl. His double-identity is still protected by the name Carter Hall, but he now acts the more interesting role of museum director. One thing will always remain the same, though — his exciting adventures!"

The new adventures of Hawkman and Hawkgirl began with the "Creature of a Thousand Shapes!," a book-length story in B&B #34. In it we meet Katar Hol and his wife Shayera, two law enforcement agents from the planet Thanagar who have traced a criminal to Earth. The villain can make himself look like any creature he has ever seen—although how he is able to duplicate that creature's powers and weaknesses is never explained. It just serves as a convenient plot device.

The story introduces Police Commissioner George Emmett, who sets the team up as curators of the Midway City Museum. There we meet the nosy Mavis Trent, an annoying character who would hang around for almost 25 years.

The issue also includes a letter from one Roy Thomas of Jackson, Missouri (soon to be Roy Thomas of Marvel, DC and **COMICS FEATURE** fame), applauding DC's plans to revive characters from the Justice Society of America. He cast a vote in favor of having Hawkman drawn by Joe Kubert.

While Kubert was not to be the artist most identified with the new Hawkman, the six issues of the character he illustrated for **Brave & The Bold** are some of the best ever seen.

Issue 35 introduces the Matter Master, a criminal scientist who discovers an element through which he can focus his brainwaves to control any element. It's a pretty standard story.

One interplanetary device which tended to give Hawkman the edge was on his orbiting spaceship, kept invisible high over Earth. The Absorbascon enabled him to absorb all knowledge from the people of Earth, although this information often needed perspective to be useful.

Gardner Fox, whether scripting Adam Strange, The Flash or other Sixties DC heroes, often came up with unusual foes and situations. Surely one of his strangest is the "Shadow-Thief of Midway City" introduced in B&B 36. A criminal who was captured when a policeman saw his shadow becomes obsessed with shadows. By chance he is able to aid a being from another dimension who learns of the criminal's interest and gives him a dimensiometer.

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Possessor of a device which opens a gateway between worlds, Carl Sands is able to transfer his body to another dimension while his shadow form remains on Earth. A special uniform and gloves enable his shadow to manipulate objects. The Shadow-Thief is born. But when the alien contacts Sands and informs him that every time the Dimensiometer is used, it disrupts the magnetic lines of Earth, Sands refuses to listen. He's infatuated with power. He won't consider returning the device, even though its continued use might plunge the Earth into an ice age!

Meanwhile, Hawkgirl snaps a picture of the Shadow-Thief and Hawkman matches the profile to that of Carl Sands. They track him down and trick him into taking off the Dimensiometer, which they leave at the museum, unaware of what it might have done to the Earth. So ended the initial three-issue tryout of the new Hawkman.

HACK AGAIN BY POPULAR DEMAND!

DC wasn't ready to risk Hawkman in his own book. But sales were good enough to justify a second guest shot in **Brave & The Bold**. This time his adventures were to be more high-flying, dealing with interplanetary menaces.

"Menace of the Dragonfly Raiders!" in issue 42 takes place entirely on Thanagar as the winged wonders return home to deal with Byth, the criminal imprisoned on Thanagar after the Hawks defeated him in their first outing.

"Masked Marauders of Earth!" in **B&B** 43 deals with the Manhawks, creatures who had menaced Thanagar years before. They turn up on Earth with a new plot to menace the home world of Hawkman and Hawkgirl.This is also the first full story to feature Hawkman's "Honor Wings" on his headpiece. They were awarded at the completion of his successful foray on Thanagar at the conclusion of issue 42.

"The Men Who Moved The World!" in issue 44 sports a beautiful wash cover by Joe Kubert and yet another alien threat to Earth. And that tale brought Hawkman's 1962 appearances to a conclusion. He would not receive his own title for another year and a half. But he'd still be around.

"The Case of the Cosmic Camera!" (in **The Atom #7** (June-July 1963)) introduced a new artist to the new Hawkman — one who would come to be singularly identified with him: Murphy Anderson. Although the issue was pencilled by Gil Kane, Anderson provided the inks. The story by Gardner Fox is excellent. A device stolen from Thanagar and brought to Earth causes the paths of Hawkman and The Atom to cross. Conveniently, the alien thieves are about the same size as The Atom. The device, the Cosmitron, is voodoo-like in that it can take cosmic photos of a planet and whatever is done to the photos happens to the planet as well! It's the epitome of the DC style of superhero story they did so well in the Sixties. What it lacks in realism compared to Marvel fare of the time, it makes up for with its sense of wonder. The future would bring further teamups of this unlike duo of Hawkman and The Atom.

Hawkman's next step towards gaining his own title took place when he shared **Mystery in Space** with Adam Strange for a few months. These would be the last issues of the title edited by Julius Schwartz. The letters column in issue 87, where his brief backup run began, features a missive from Joe Kubert explaining why other committments prevented him from continuing the Hawkman strip himself. He thanked all of the readers whose many letters asking to see Hawkman on a regular basis prompted his return.

"Since I am unable to draw Hawkman any more, I can't think of a more capable and conscientious artist than 'Murph' Anderson handling it. This guy has proven his quality time and again in the successful strips he's done, notably the Atomic Knights. From the work 'Murph' has done on the Hawkman pages that I've already seen, the Winged Wonder is headed for greater heights (pun)! The one fear I *do* have, is that 'Murph' will do the feature so well, that no one will ever remember that *I* had worked on it at one time, too!"

That's what happened. Anderson turned out some of his best work on Hawkman. The backup lasted three issues, **MIS** #90 was a book-length Hawkman tale drawn by Infantino and Anderson and guest-starring Adam Strange. Strange would prove to be another character that Hawkman would have interesting teamups with over the years. The story, again by Fox, is one of the best in the Adam Strange series — but Hawkman definitely has costar status.

NOW...IN HIS OWN MAGAZINE

Hawkman finally got his own book just two months after his last **Mystery In Space** outing. **Hawkman #1** (May 1964) has fine artwork, but weak stories. They're really just reworkings of themes which had become commonplace in the Hawkman stories which appeared in **B&B** and **MIS**.

Issue 2 is much better. It features a classic Fox story of alien invasion. As usual, Hawkman uses his wits to devise a weapon to defeat it. Even the aliens anticipate this. We quickly learn that they consider Hawkman the only obstacle to their plan because of his reputation for finding a foe's weakness where none is apparent. In the backup story, Hawkman finds the wings of Icarus just in time to use them when his regular wings (which control his angle of flight and give him mobility) are destroyed. While Hawkman's wings are important to him, his anti-gravity belt is what enables him to fly.

Issue 4 (Oct.-Nov. '64) introduces a unique character — Zatanna. The daughter of the crime-fighting Magician, Zatara (who appeared as an occasional back-up feature in **Action** and **World's Finest** in the early Fifties), Zatanna is searching for the truth about his unexplained disappearance. Zatanna would continue to pop up now and then in various titles. Her search wouldn't end until DC ran a mini-series in the back of **World's Finest** in 1971.

"Steal, Shadow — Steal!" in issue 5 marks the return of a foe who was too interesting, and too weird, to only appear once — the Shadow Thief of Midway City. When last seen, Carl Sands' dimensiometer seemed to have stopped working when he'd been captured. But it was all a trick. When his cellmate helps him escape, Sands retrieves the winding mechanism of his device and resumes his career as the Shadow Thief. He's one of your more foolhardy villains too. Although he knows full well that the forces he unleashes will plunge the Earth into an Ice age, he doesn't care! He'll be safe in another dimension. During their battle, Sands figures out the identities of Hawkman and Hawkgirl. Interestingly, he can't use the information!

"World Where Evolution Ran Wild!" in issue 6 is a prime example of the imaginative science fiction stories which Fox wrote so well. His Adam Strange series in **Mystery In Space** really gave him the freedom to excell in these. Add some of Murphy Anderson's best art and you have one of the best issues in the series.

Another foe from the **Brave & The Bold** tryouts, The Matter Master, returns in issue 9. This story also marks the Winged Wonder's reteaming with The Atom. The Atom first encountered this villain in the pages of **Justice League of America** #28 (before Hawkman joined the organization). The Mighty Mite only makes a cameo appearance at the conclusion of the story. Hawkman and Hawkgirl have been reduced in size and need the advice of an expert in order to regain their normal stature. This results in the heroes revealing their secret identities to each other.

In the Sixties it was common for an editor to leave a book and take the creative team with him. **Hawkman** #22 introduced the new line-up of editor George Kashdan, writer Bob Haney and artists Dick Dillin and Chuck Cuidera. The results were less than exciting. In fact, the art style was so different from what had been done previously by Joe Kubert and then by Murphy Anderson that it looked like something out of the Fifties. The Kubert cover on issue 27 just made it all the more clear what we were missing. A very different art style was revealed upon opening the cover. Readers at the time apparently thought so, too. Issue 27 was the last in the series. Ending in 1968, it would be 17 years before Hawkman would regain his own magazine.

But Hawkman was by no means out. He went back to serving stints as a guest star as well as appearing in occasional backup strips.

Hawkman's guest appearance in **The Atom** #31 (June-July 1967) preceded the demise of the Hawks own title but served as a harbinger of things to come. Hawkman leaped from his own defunct book directly into the pages of **The Atom** now called **The Atom & Hawkman** beginning with issue 39 (Oct. — Nov. 1968). The story, a book-length tale featuring both characters, was written by Bob Kanigher and drawn by Murphy Anderson and Joe Giella. It was an unlikely art team. While Anderson's work is clearly evident in the layouts and design of the pages, Giella's inking often masks Anderson's pencils, particularly in the rendering of faces. Beginning with issue 40, The Atom and Hawkman each have their own strips. In that issue, "The Man With An Inbuilt Panic Button!" is written by Gardner Fox and drawn by Joe Kubert and Murphy Anderson — the three who brought so much life to the character in the early Sixties! The story of a man who involuntarily teleports himself out of life-threatening situations is weak compared to what Fox was doing just a few years before within the limitations of a 9 page story. But it's not bad. The cover, a very dramatic rendering by Joe Kubert of The Hawkman standing in a thunderstorm while he holds the body of a bird in one hand and the body of the Atom in the other, has nothing to do with anything in the book! It's still a great image, though. Issue 41's Hawkman story features the same creative team in a plot which continues the events in issue 40.

BRAVE BOLD
presents
HAWKMAN
NOV.
NO. 44
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE
ARMED WITH A WEAPON OF THE PAST, THE WINGED WONDER BATTLES AGAINST WEAPONS OF THE FUTURE... IN...
"The MEN WHO MOVED THE WORLD!"

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HAWKMAN
JULY
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE
I CAN WARD OFF THE ALIENS' NUCLEAR RAY-BLASTS WITH THIS ANCIENT SHIELD, BUT THEY HAVE NO DEFENSE AGAINST MY FIREWORKS WEAPON!
featuring
"SECRET of the SIZZLING SPARKLERS!"

While Kubert continues on the covers, issue 42 is drawn by Dick Dillin & Sid Greene (from a story by Denny O'Neil) and teams up the title characters.

Back in his own solo strip, issue 43 features Hawkman by Robert Kanigher and artist Murphy Anderson. Although the pairs of solo stories in issues 43 & 44 are self-contained, all four feature the Gentlemen Ghost. The villain is a revised version of a character who frequently plagued Hawkman in stories in **Flash Comics** in the Forties. This incarnation of Gentleman Jim is a highway robber of 150 years ago, who, when being hung for his crimes, died only to have his ghost catapulted fifteen decades into the future. Surprised to still be around and kicking, he resumes a crime spree while bedeviling Hawkman with little clues that make him think that The Ghost is just an ordinary human criminal. The story in 43 is a Ghost story with Hawkman only secondary as it focuses on The Ghost's efforts to find a rare jewel whose radiations will restore a woman's sight.

Issue 45 marks the end of **The Atom and Hawkman** as a title. Both characters are cast adrift to appear infrequently in the years to follow the 1969 demise of their title.

While Hawkman continued to appear in the JLA (he even encounters The Shadow Thief again in JLA #111 and 139), he only rarely appeared as a backup feature (in **Detective** 429, 434, 445, 446, 452, 454, 455, and 467. Scripted by E. Nelson Bridwell and drawn by such artists as Rich Buckler and Jose Luis Garcia Lopez, they're not bad. But the one by Marshall Rogers and Terry Austin in #467 is the best).

Hawkman returned in full glory for three issues of **Showcase** (#101-103) in 1978. The story by Jack Harris, Al Milgrom and Murphy Anderson once more teams the Hawks with Adam Strange. The story wasn't as good as the idea. Virtually every hero acted out of character compared to previous appearances! Whether this could have led to a new Hawkman title became moot because of what was known as "The DC Implosion." During that dark corporate event, numerous titles were cancelled or cut back and stories which had already been drawn (such as the final issue of **Shade, The Changing Man** and a Ditko Creeper issue of **Showcase**) have yet to see publication outside of an in-house limited run magazine put together for copyright purposes.

It would be seven more years before Hawkman would once again take center stage. The limited series, **The Shadow War of Hawkman**, by Tony Isabella, Richard Howell and Alfredo P. Alcala ran for four successful issues and re-established the characters (with Hawkgirl now called Hawkwoman). The storyline establishes a new less-than-benevolent military government on Thanagar which is bent on conquering other worlds — beginning with Earth. Hawkman and Hawkwoman choose to fight this battle alone. The Hawks now have a new ongoing series that differs greatly from the stories of the '60s. Isabella and Howell are crafting darker tales than those of Gardner Fox and Murphy Anderson. In them, the Hawks face impossible odds and are unable to trust anyone.

JAMES VAN HISE is the former editor of one of the oldest fanzines in the comic book field, author of The Art of Al Williamson and editor of Monsterland

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